

According to  
the Pattern

J. GREGORY

MANTLE



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# According to the Pattern

By J. GREGORY MANTLE

*Author of "The Way of the Cross" and "Better Things"*

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TO  
THE FRAGRANT MEMORY  
OF  
FRANK W. CROSSLEY  
OF MANCHESTER  
WHOSE LIFE OF  
SELF-FORGETFUL LOVE  
IMPRESSED THE  
AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK  
MORE THAN THAT  
OF ANY OTHER MAN HE HAS EVER KNOWN  
AS BEING

“According to the Pattern”



## PREFACE

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WE are living in a day of lowered ideals. Faber's remark, about the devil's power to fight against God as successfully by "low views" as by mortal sins, is only too true. A variety of hostile influences are at work to make men content with a life that is not "According to the Pattern." Wesley, who was assuredly raised up by God to give emphasis to the doctrine of Sanctification by Faith, always maintained that the devil had a special hatred of that doctrine, and even stirred up the people of God against it. Let a man become prejudiced against Holiness, and it is impossible, until his prejudice is removed, that he should become conformed to the Divine Image. Yet while men lower their ideal, and consequently lower their life, God's Ideal remains the same. He never lowers it to meet the "spirit of the age." He must therefore ultimately condemn all self-willed architecture. He has left us without excuse in the gift of a Saviour who is both Pattern and Power. In His life He has revealed the Father's Will; by His death He has secured the Father's Power. The Example without the Dynamic might well drive us to despair. I covet no greater privilege than that of making truth plain to any seeker, "even as Truth is in Jesus."

BRIGHTON,

*Christmas 1898.*



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# ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN

“You should at least pitch your ideals high enough to make sure they will be called extravagant by all those in whose hearts is the love of the world, and not the love of the Father. I would turn all my ideals out-of-doors at once, and get a fresh consignment, if I did not feel sure that those who are without an experimental knowledge of the power of Jesus Christ would call them fanatical and intemperate. Of course there should be a Christian reasonableness in all our ideals; but ever since the Pentecost the fanaticism has been in pitching them too low and not too high. Having once formed your ideals, hold them fast. Never turn your back upon them. I am ashamed to hear some men talk of their ideals. They sneer at the ideals of their youth as if they were a species of wild oats they had been sowing, and not God-begotten and immortal seed. Hell keeps carnival when it can shame us out of our ideals.”—THOMAS G. SELBY.

## CHAPTER I

### *"ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN"*

#### A Life of Obedience to Vision

WHEN Moses was about to construct the Tabernacle, he was warned of God: "See (saith He) that thou make all things according to the Pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. viii. 5). In several passages in the Pentateuch this admonition is repeated (Exod. xxv. 9, 40; xxvi. 30; xxvii. 8; Num. viii. 4). We will not discuss the profitless question as to how God gave Moses a description of the Tabernacle He wanted him to build. God, who in vision communicated to Ezekiel the entire plan of that magnificent temple which he describes in such detail, could surely have made known to Moses, in the same way, the far simpler structure of the primitive Tabernacle. All the writer of the Hebrews is concerned to maintain is that there was a true religious symbolism in the Tabernacle and its service. Nothing was left to the unaided fancy, self-will, or caprice of Moses. It was not a question of producing something artistically beautiful, but the embodiment in the Pattern of

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certain profound truths concerning God, His relation to man, and man's acceptable approach to God. And so "when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, the unbuilt Tabernacle was already in existence in his mind, as it had been already before in existence in the mind of God. Not yet had it any material existence ; but its idea was there. It was not visible or tangible. The gold, the silver, and the brass ; the blue and purple and scarlet ; the fine linen and goat's hair ; the rams' skins dyed red ; the brilliant lamps and carved cherubs shone as yet in no earthly sunshine ; fragrance of the spices floated on no earthly air ; the curtains waved in no terrestrial breezes ; the stakes which held the structure had been driven in no field of our common ground ; it was not yet in being, as a material fact, a bright, strange apparition, such as by and by moved with the host of Israel, and filled the tribes of their enemies with wonder. But yet, in a true sense, it had existence when God had opened the chamber of His will in which the idea of the unbuilt Tabernacle already stood complete, and showed it to His servant. All that afterwards took place, all the slow building of the Tabernacle by the offerings of the people, was but the transference from the region of ideas to the region of realities of that which existed already in the mind of God." \*

The great preacher whose words are here quoted, pictures the birth of a child into the world, and asks whether there is anywhere in the universe a picture of what that child's life ought to be, and may be. He answers that if God is that child's Father, there must

\* Phillips Brooks, "Sermons Preached in English Churches," p. 3.



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surely be in God's mind a picture of what that child, with his peculiar faculties and nature, may become in the completeness of his life. When manhood is reached, the real question of his life will be not,—How much is he worth? What position has he won? But,—How far has the idea which was in the mind of God when he was born been translated into visible realities? How does the tabernacle which he has built correspond with the Pattern which is in the mount?

What searching reflections this question awakens! When the end of this brief earthly existence is reached, and men pass judgment on the life, how possible it is for them to approve of the plan, praise the genius, admire the architecture, and write flattering words in the paper or utter them over the grave, while God, judging the life by its conformity or non-conformity to the Pattern, has no word of approval, simply because the Divine ideal has never found fulfilment in the human real.

### *I. God Reveals His Pattern.*

There can be no responsibility without revelation. No builder can be blamed for failure in realising the architect's ideal who has not been allowed to see the plan. Moses was held responsible for the faithful execution of his work because God had showed him the Pattern in the mount. Many of us know what it is to have set our children a task which, despite repeated instructions as to how it was to be done, they did not understand. At last we have taken the task into our own hands and have worked it out before their eyes, and principles that it was difficult

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to explain are embodied in active form. How much easier it has been for them to study the realised product, and then work it out again in their own way!

By the mouth of the lawgiver and prophet, priest and psalmist, God had explained and defined the life He wanted His children to live. But the mind of man was so dull of comprehension, and his powers of imitation were so feeble, that the constant complaint of Jehovah was, "My covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them" (Jer. xxxi. 32). One way yet remained, and in infinite pity and condescension God took it. Stooping to human conditions, God worked out before His children the principles of the Pattern life. "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory." For all time the ideal of God is embodied in human form. Our responsibility to build our tabernacle according to the Pattern is immeasurably increased, because, in compassion to our impotence, God has made it known that not by imitation but by indwelling do we become partakers of the Divine nature. In one sentence, our Pattern has become our Power, that so we may be as He was in the world. On Mount Sinai Moses saw the Pattern by which he henceforth wrought; we see ours on Mount Calvary, from whence, despite the darkness, a brighter glory streams. From that utterly surrendered life, "obedient unto death," delighting under all circumstances in the will of God, a voice ever reaches the listening ear: "See that thou make all things according to the Pattern that was shewed thee in the mount."

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In the valley of Chamounix there is an imposing and artistic monument. It commemorates the first ascent of Mont Blanc. At the top of some massive blocks of granite are two figures. One of them—Balmat, the Swiss guide—is eagerly pointing out the way to the summit of Mont Blanc, while the face of the other—De Saussure—gives expression to enthusiastic joy and satisfaction at the prospect of accomplishing the ascent. Have there been no seasons in our life when, content to live upon low-levels, the Divine finger has pointed out to us a life as far removed from that which we have lived as, speaking figuratively, the summit of Mont Blanc is from the vale of Chamounix? Such visitations of the Spirit come to us all. They cannot be counted upon as to when they should come or how long they should stay, but, as Wordsworth says,

“One moment now may teach us more than fifty years of reason.”

God sends these visitations to break the binding spell of religious custom and habit. We are so apt to take our Pattern from the valley instead of the mount; to measure down to the imperfect patterns we see around us, instead of measuring up to the perfect Pattern we see above us. Hence there is no passion in our prayers, no fervour in our piety, no zeal in our service, no love in our duty, no sacrifice in our giving. A stagnation has come over us. Greatly to be prized, therefore, are the hours, when, stirred by the breath of the Divine Spirit, we see the unspeakable shame of the life that centres around the I, and the

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unspeakable glory of a life absolutely surrendered to God.

Sometimes God compels His children to stand aside from their work and look at it from a distance, just as the artist has to stand back from the picture he is painting to judge of the effect. There are visions that cannot be seen while we yield to the temptations of this restless age, and spend our life almost wholly in the broad glare of publicity.

“There are songs which only flow in the loneliest shades of night,  
There are flowers which cannot grow in a blaze of tropical light,  
There are crystals which cannot form till the vessel be cooled and stilled;  
Crystal, and flower, and song, given as God hath willed.”

How different the life and work appear when seen from within the four walls of a sick chamber! From that point of view, many a worker has been almost startled to discover the want of balance between work and prayer. As God has thrown His light upon the life, he has been amazed at the feverishness and fretfulness, the impatience and inconsiderateness which have characterised it. The Pattern life, so strenuous and yet so restful, so fearless and yet so dependent, so full of zeal and yet so full of calm, stands unveiled before him. Ashamed and confounded because of his own ways, he comes forth with a new light in his eye, a new purpose in his heart, to engage no longer in self-willed architecture, but to make all things according to the Pattern that has been shown him in the mount.

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### II. *All God's Revelings of the Pattern involve Responsibility.*

Just as there is no responsibility without revelation, so there is no revelation without responsibility. Speaking of such revealings, one has wisely said: “What you see, you can never unsee.” There may be months, or even years, of disobedience—years in which, consequently, there is no open vision—but the man who has seen the Pattern in the mount can never be as though he had not seen it. Christ represents His own life as a constant looking to a Pattern, and a constant reproduction of that Pattern: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can *do* nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also *doeth* in like manner” (John v. 19, 20). His eye was always fixed upon His Father, and what things the Father was working in the unseen the Son was repeating in the world of men. The whole of Christ's life-plan was being unfolded before His gaze by the movements of His Father, and re-duplicated by Himself in loving and faithful obedience.

Sometimes a man is tempted, through the pressure of sordid care, through sloth or self-indulgence, through association with those who are content to have the lowest place in the Kingdom, to let the Pattern fade from his vision, and account it but such stuff as dreams are made of. The only way to keep the Pattern clear is to work it out. Coleridge has remarked that “Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as *so* true that they lose



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all the power of truth, and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul. To restore a commonplace truth to its first *uncommon* lustre, you need only translate it into action." The tree of knowledge is not necessarily the Tree of Life. A man may be a seer and not a doer, as well as a hearer and not a doer. There are undoubtedly those who use visions of heavenly things for their own self-deception. They are filled with admiration at the Pattern they have seen ; their heart is thrilled with the thought of seeing it worked out in their life ; and they indulge in a soft, self-complacent feeling, as if the tabernacle was already in course of erection, while as yet not a single step has been taken towards the building.

This constitutes the difference between the man of emotion and the man of principle, the man of feeling and the man of faith. The one is charmed with high ideals, and proceeds to work them out while the glow is upon him. He continues as long as the Convention, the excitement or emotion, lasts, and then he breaks down. The other toils on steadily along the dull, flat levels, diligently and faithfully working out the Pattern, even when the brightness has faded from the sky and the glow and enthusiasm have vanished. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that *doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven " (Matt. vii. 21). The blessedness of citizenship in the kingdom of heaven is reserved for those who consent that their life should be made according to the Pattern which has been shown them in the mount.

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“ We cannot kindle when we will,  
The fire which in the heart resides,  
The Spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery the soul abides ;  
But tasks in hours of insight willed  
Must be through hours of gloom fulfilled.”

To have seen the Pattern ; to have had our own unfinished and unlovely building condemned by the vision ; to have heard God’s voice calling us once more to arise and build ; to have anticipated in the light of eternity the folly and wickedness of a life not according to the Pattern, and then to go fashioning ourselves after our former lusts, is to expose ourselves to the many stripes of those who knew their Lord’s will and did it not.

In one of the letters of Frances Ridley Havergal, she says : “ I have just read, and been struck with, the expression, ‘ *possibilities of Christian life.* ’ In my own case, what were formerly only fair, faint, far-off possibilities are now actualities to me ; while a grand new horizon of possibilities widens out before me. I look for these in God’s time to become actualities ; and then to see still further holy and happy possibilities.” This is according to the Divine Law. When we resolve that the possibilities shall become actualities, God immediately reveals still grander possibilities, for there is no finality in the Christ-life, either on earth or in heaven.

### III. *God allows no Deviation from the Pattern.*

Ponder for a moment some of the directions God gave to Moses. “ And thou shalt make a candlestick

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of pure gold : of beaten work shall the candlestick be made, even its base, and its shaft ; its cups, its knops, and its flowers, shall be of one piece with it : and there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof : three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof ; three cups made like almond-blossoms in one branch, a knop and a flower ; and three cups made like almond-blossoms in the other branch, a knop and a flower " (Exod. xxv. 31-33).

There is nothing trivial with God. The skins, colours, rings, staves, figures, dishes, spoons, bowls, knops, flowers, lamps, snuffers, spices, are all Divinely described. Every tache, loop, hook, tenon, and socket was on a Divine plan. Human ingenuity had no place in the building of the Tabernacle. Moses was admonished that all things were to be made according to the Pattern that had been shewed him in the mount.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether Israel understood the full meaning of the Tabernacle, or whether even Moses foresaw the results of his faithfulness and obedience. He at least was sure of this, that anything expressly ordained by God had some design and significance which might be marred by his carelessness or disobedience. A man destitute of this conviction might have argued that the exact position of the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, for example, was of very little consequence, and that if it were only erected, and sacrifice were duly offered upon it, then it might exchange places with the Ark of the Covenant.

Supposing, for a moment, that such an act of

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human interference with the Divine Pattern were possible, the alteration of position would have silenced for generations the proclamation of the truth that men must be pardoned, purified, and prepared before they can stand in the immediate presence of God. Yet it was centuries after the erection of the Tabernacle that such teaching was brought out in all its fulness in the Epistle to the Hebrews. God expects of us what we expect of our servants—fidelity, thoroughness, exactitude, whether we see the results of these or not.

One of the most striking features in the chapter that records the completion of the Tabernacle is the reiteration of the expression, "As the Lord commanded Moses." It occurs no less than eight times (Exod. xl. 16, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32). "So Moses finished the work. *Then* the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (vers. 33, 34).

This token of the Divine approval and appropriation followed, under similar circumstances, when the Temple was completed according to the Pattern (1 Chron. xxviii. 11-14, 19; 2 Chron. v. 1, 13, 14).

"We beheld His glory," says John of Him who was the antitype both of Tabernacle and Temple, and whose life was so accurate in all its details that He could say during its course, "I do always the things that please Him;" and at its ending, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

The glory of the Tabernacle was the Holiest Place. The glory of the Holiest Place was the Shekinah, and the word "glory" in John i. 14 corresponds with the

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visible manifestation of the presence of Jehovah in Exodus xl. 34. The tabernacle of the Redeemer's flesh had its Shekinah, not a physical effulgence striking to the eye of sense, but a holy brightness which the eager eye of love beheld.

What would have happened had not those men and women in the Upper Room been willing that all things in their lives should be made according to the Pattern which had been shewed them? God must have delayed the Pentecost, for He gives the Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts v. 32), and the Shekinah of the New Covenant would never have rested upon faithless and disobedient men and women.

Has the indwelling Spirit yet thrown His solar radiance, His winsome loveliness, upon your face and form? If not, surely there is a cause. No sooner is the work finished, according to the commandment of God, than the glory of the Lord fills the house of the Lord. And if the Shekinah dwells not in our clay tabernacle, transfiguring it with a beauty that is altogether Divine, it is because we have stayed the hand of the Builder, or, disregarding the warning of God, we have departed somewhere from the Pattern which has been shown us in the mount.





“EACH gets from Jesus that which the nature which he brings can take. With what measure each gives Himself to the Saviour, the Saviour gives Himself in His salvation back to each. When at last there comes a man with his self all open, with door behind door, back into the most secret chambers, all unclosed, ready to give himself entirely, wanting everything, ready to take everything that Jesus has to give; ready to take the whole of Jesus into the whole of himself, only then are the last gates withdrawn. As when the ocean gathers itself up and enters with its tide the open mouth of the river, like a conqueror riding into a surrendered town, so does the Lord in all His richness, with His perfect standards, His mighty motives, His infinite hopes, give Himself to the soul which has been utterly given to Him.”  
—Dr PHILLIPS BROOKS.

## CHAPTER II

### *THE SHEKEL OF THE SANCTUARY*

#### A Life Weighed in the Balances

THE earliest mention of the "shekel of the Sanctuary" is in Exodus xxx. 12, 13, a passage which refers to the numbering of the people. A considerable outlay was involved in fulfilling the various commands given with respect to the Tabernacle and its furniture. One source from whence this expenditure was met is indicated in chapter xxv. 2-7, viz., the voluntary contributions of the people. A second source is indicated here. On taking a census of the people, Moses was told to exact from them, as atonement money, the sum of half a shekel of silver. In strictness, atonement could only be made by blood, but the purpose to which the silver was to be applied (xxx. 16) required that the ransom should take this form. The animal sacrifice is therefore commuted for money, and the money is admitted as atonement. The requirement of atonement money seems to have been based on the idea, that formal enrolment in the number of God's chosen people necessarily brought home to every man

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his unworthiness to belong to that holy company ; hence the need of making atonement in some way or other. The payment of the half shekel was an acknowledgment of sin, equally binding upon all, and so made equal for all—"the rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less" (ver. 15).

But an ordinary half shekel would not be accepted ; it must be "after the shekel of the Sanctuary." The Hebrew word "sanctuary" is *qôdesh* (pronounced *kôdesh*), and means sanctity or holiness, hence the shekel was also called "the holy shekel." If money was used by the Israelites in the desert, it was Egyptian, and, in the absence of explicit information, we can only conjecture that there was a depreciated currency used among the people in their every-day transactions, consisting of worn-out coins, or coins which contained more alloy than was legal. Such coins could not be accepted for atonement money, or for such a purpose as that indicated in chapter xxxviii. 24. All such claims must be met by coins containing



the full weight of the precious metal, as prescribed by law. This undepreciated currency was, in contradistinction to the other, called "the shekel of the

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Sanctuary," or "the holy shekel." The exact value of this holy shekel was twenty gerahs (xxx. 13), or two shillings and fourpence in English money.

Here is "a holy shekel." On the one side are the words, "Shekel of Israel," and above the laver the words, "Year 3." On the reverse are the words, "Jerusalem the Holy," and a twig bearing three buds, the buds of the pomegranate, the symbol of fruitfulness. In their ordinary buying and selling God's people were therefore continually reminded that they were citizens of a holy city, and that the accumulation of earthly riches was not to be their governing thought, but fruitfulness to God.

The shekel was also undoubtedly *a weight* as well as a coin. In this same chapter, Exodus xxx., the ingredients of the holy anointing oil are specified with much minuteness. The exact weight of each spice is given, and the shekels were to be "after the shekel of the Sanctuary" (ver. 24). The sacred shekel was therefore a standard weight, kept carefully by the priests with the vessels of the Sanctuary, by which all other weights were regulated. In the Deuteronomic Law we read: "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights (literally a stone and a stone), a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Deut. xxv. 13-15).

No sooner did Israel become a commercial nation, than they began to be dishonest. "We should gather

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that the commercial fraud of those primitive times took this comparatively simple form: the merchant would have, let us say, a half shekel which came a little short of the regulation weight; or he would have a cubit measure (1 ft. 9 ins.) half an inch under the cubit; or he would have a vessel professing to hold a *hin* (i.e., a little more than a gallon), but actually holding a little less than a gallon; or he would have a dry measure, marked as an *ephah* (i.e., about three pecks), but incapable of holding the ostensible quantity. In an ordinary way, he would use these inadequate measures, and thus nibble a little from every article which he sold to a customer. But in the event of a purchaser presenting himself who had a fuller knowledge, there would be a just half-shekel weight in the bag, a full cubit rule hidden behind the counter, a *hin* or an *ephah* measure of legal dimensions within easy reach."\*

It follows that if "unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure" (Lev. xix. 35) was regarded by God with such detestation, there must have been somewhere an authoritative standard by which the weights and measures in common use were to be adjusted.

The fact that such standards exist among us make this provision perfectly intelligible. In the wall of the Octagonal Hall in the House of Commons is deposited the standard yard, which is a length of bronze, and a mass of platinum which is the standard pound, by which the weights and measures of the empire are regulated. At certain periods these are

\* "Expositor's Bible," Proverbs, pp. 218, 219.

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disentombed, and are compared with the standards kept by the Board of Trade, which, in their turn, govern all the weights and measures in the country. But for such a provision, who would be sure of getting thirty-six inches to the yard or sixteen ounces to the pound?

"After the shekel of the Sanctuary" was the requirement for all transactions between man and man, as well as for all transactions between man and God; for the man who would nibble a little from his customer would, if he had the opportunity, nibble a little from his Maker. Jehovah could accept no offering that was not after "the holy shekel."

### *I. Give Sanctuary Measure to God.*

Many are conscious of spiritual barrenness, and are weary and parched with thirst. The heavens seem as brass, and no refreshing dew distils its welcome moisture upon their souls. In many a place Judah mourns, the gates thereof languish, and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up. The ground is chapped, the ploughmen are ashamed and cover their heads. The little ones come to the pits, and, finding no water, return with their vessels empty (Jer. xiv. 2-7). Under these depressing circumstances, nothing is easier than to talk and pray as if everyone was to blame but ourselves. The petitions frequently offered suggest an unwillingness on the part of God to give; as if He needed to be coaxed and persuaded to give what He has pledged Himself to bestow.

Finney, the famous evangelist, maintained that the devil's most successful means of destroying souls has



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been the teaching that the promotion of God's work is so mysteriously a subject of Divine sovereignty, that there is no natural connection between the means and the end. "There is one fact," he asserts, "under the government of God, worthy of universal notice and of everlasting remembrance ; it is, that the most useful and important things are most easily and certainly obtained by the use of the appointed means. This is evidently a principle in the Divine administration ; and I fully believe that, could facts be made known, it would be found that when the appointed means have been rightly used, spiritual blessings have been obtained with greater uniformity than temporal ones."

Instead, therefore, of imputing, either directly or indirectly, the blame for a depressed condition of spiritual life, either in ourselves or others, to God, let us ask whether we are giving to Him "after the shekel of the Sanctuary"? God's people, in the days of Malachi, brought a *portion* of the tithe, not "the *whole*" (see Mal. iii. 10, R.V.), into the storehouse, therefore the windows of heaven were closed against them. The bolts that hold back those windows are always on the human and never on the Divine side. When men bring Sanctuary measure to God, heaven's windows fly open at the breath of prayer, and God pours out blessings in such abundance that there is not room enough to receive them.

If, then, this superabundant enrichment is not ours, there must be a reason. "The Lord's arm is not shortened that it cannot save : His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear." In Him we are never straitened.

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The sun shines for as many hours, and with as much energy, on the shortest as on the longest day. Yet one season is beautiful with warmth, brightness, and flowers, and the other is sombre with frost, darkness, and barrenness. But the difference is not in the sun but in the earth. That portion of the earth upon which the December shadows fall is then at the greatest distance from the unalterable rays. The explanation of impoverished lives is in human reservation and not in Divine sovereignty.

Is our surrender absolute, and so "after the shekel of the Sanctuary"? Andrew Murray tells how when he was in Scotland, there was, in the company of those who were talking about the condition of Christ's Church, a godly man who had much to do in training workers. When Mr Murray asked him what he would say was the great need of the Church, and the message that ought to be preached, he answered very quietly: "*Absolute surrender to God is the one thing.*" Then he went on to tell how workers with whom he had to deal, who were sound on that point, always made progress, while those in whose life there was the least reservation often went back and left the work. It is useless to expect God's superabundant blessing until there has been absolute surrender to Him. When a great liner is leaving the harbour, an incident like this sometimes occurs. The moment of her departure has arrived, and all the cables that held her are dragged aboard, but she is still held to the landing-stage by a shore rope. Yonder is a sailor trying in vain to disentangle the rope that only tightens with the straining of the ship, until a cry

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rings out from the captain, "Cut that shore rope!" In a moment the rope is cut and the vessel is gliding into the deep water. Multitudes are surrendered, but not absolutely. It is only a shore rope that holds them to the world; but that single correspondence with the old life is fatal to their progress, and it must be severed before they can launch out into the great deep of God's love, and experience the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Where is the short weight? *Perhaps it is in the prayer-life.* How the "Diary and Letters of Dr Andrew Bonar" rebuke those who make the claim of *work*, instead of the claim of *prayer*, supreme. "Unless I get up to the measure of at least two hours in *pure prayer* every day," he says, "I shall not be satisfied." Again: "I was living very grossly, labouring night and day in visiting *with very little prayerfulness.*" When only able to preach once a day, he says: "If God speaks from heaven once, *and only for a minute*, yet that voice is felt in the parish all the week, yea, for months afterwards." Writing to a friend, he says: "Oh, brother, pray; in spite of Satan, pray; spend hours in prayer; rather neglect friends than not pray; rather fast and lose breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper—and sleep too—than not pray."

"Little is much when God is in it,  
Man's busiest day's not worth God's minute;  
Much is little everywhere,  
If God the labour do not share."

It is because of short weight here that "we sow much and bring in little; and earn wages only to put it into a bag with holes" (Hag. i. 6).

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*Perhaps the short weight is in the commercial-life.*

"A balance of deceit is an abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is His delight" (Prov. xi. 1). "A just balance and scales are the Lord's; all the weights of the bag are His work" (Prov. xvi. 11). That is to say, these things come under His law, and are subject to the Divine ordinances which regulate all man's dealings. God is as much concerned about our buying and selling as about our praying. We please Him not so much by singing hymns as by honest business. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Prov. xxi. 3). God's eye is not only upon the tradesman in his secret place of prayer; it is upon him in the shop, the factory, the office, the bank, the exchange, the commercial room. What becomes of the theory that "business is business and religion is religion," when it is known that God insists upon having a voice in the smallest business transactions? To deceive the ignorant and unwary by a trick of the finger is to be guilty of that which is "an abomination in His sight." He is not the God of the hills only: He is the God of the valleys. In every shop, factory, and warehouse He claims to set up His throne, and He looks to see "after the shekel of the Sanctuary" written upon every yardstick and upon the beam of every balance.

*Perhaps the short weight is in the home-life.*

It has been pointed out that it is immediately after Paul's exhortations to husbands and wives, to parents and children, to masters and servants, that he says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye

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may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. vi. 12). It is for the life in the home that the whole armour is most needed, for "the home test is the severest test of all." It is there that our religion is appraised at its proper value; it is there we are so greatly tempted to be off guard; it is there the enemy is most on the watch. Are our relations with our loved ones "after the shekel of the Sanctuary"? Are we as good-tempered and agreeable in our own homes as in the homes of other people? Have we as much affection and thought and consideration for our own children as for other people's? Happy are they who give God such Sanctuary measure in their home as that

"Angels watching o'er it cry,  
Lo! this is like our home on high."

### II. *Claim Sanctuary Measure from God.*

There is one great law that pervades the universe of God: "*Obey the law of the power and the power obeys you.*" There are certain laws that govern that wonderful force we call electricity. There must be unbroken connection with the battery; perfect isolation of the connecting wire; and a perfectly clean touch where surfaces are in contact. Let these laws be obeyed, and a little child can command the electric current; let them be disobeyed, and no physical power in the universe can command it. The electric lamp opposite my house refused one day to give its welcome light. The electric current reported itself at the works as leaking. On investigation it was found that the law respecting a perfectly clean touch

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when surfaces are in contact was being disobeyed, and that in consequence there was darkness. No sooner was the law obeyed than the light flashed forth with its wonted brilliance.

In a remarkable article on "The Supremacy of Law," Rev. F. B. Meyer says:—

"When certain people describe their deepest experiences, they so often allude to all nights of prayer, to days of fastings, to months of special preparation. Their emotional life is evidently strongly wrought upon. Their methods of regarding the service of God and ministry to man are apt to be coloured with the light of their special experiences. And many who are deficient in the emotional element, who regard life from another standpoint, are apt to suppose that the Pentecostal gift is mystical and transcendental, a matter of temperament, to be accounted for by the operation of no law or method within their reach.

"This is a profound pity, and a great loss ensues to the more thoughtful and unemotional natures which love God with their mind, and will, and strength rather than their heart, using *that* as expressing the emotional rather than the volitional. But for all such there is great comfort in pondering these words of the apostle, 'the *law* of the Spirit of life.'

"The Spirit of God works on regular, precise, and ascertainable principles. There is no variableness or shadow of turning in His action. The spasmodic, the fitful, the capricious, have no place in His mighty operations within the human heart. And if only we gave as much time to investigate the laws of His



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operation as an Edison gives to the investigation of the laws of the physical world, we should be able to secure His regular work within us, and His unintermittent operation with us in every effort we make for the glory of God.

"The apostles received the Pentecostal power because they so carefully and literally obeyed the laws and conditions that Jesus laid down ; and similarly it will be in the experience of the Church to-day. They who obey most absolutely and completely will receive most conspicuously and gloriously.

"For when once these laws are obeyed, the Divine Spirit (if I may say it without irreverence) has no option than to obey. Not that we are to suppose that He would arbitrarily withhold His gracious help from any one. Nowhere has God spoken in secret, saying, Seek ye My face in vain. But, even though a man had forfeited the Divine complacency, yet, if he should obey these conditions, the flow of the Spirit through his life would again become methodical and plenteous." \*

Having brought Sanctuary measure to God, we may therefore with all confidence claim Sanctuary measure from Him. What a study is that wonderful word of measurement, "*according to*," in the letters of Paul, and what a vision it gives us of God's Sanctuary measure! We are "foreordained unto adoption as sons . . . *according to* the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. i. 5). "We have our redemption through His blood . . . *according to* the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7). He has made known to us the

\* *Out and Out*, vol. xi. p. 284.



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mystery of His will, "*according to His good pleasure*" (Eph. i. 9). The power towards those who believe is "*according to the mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies*" (Eph. i. 19, 20). He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us*" (Eph. iii. 20). To "each one of us is grace given *according to the measure of the gift of Christ*" (Eph. iv. 7). The body of our humiliation will be "conformed to the body of His glory, *according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself*" (Phil. iii. 21). God will supply all our need *according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus* (Phil. iv. 19). We are "strengthened with all power, *according to the might of His glory*" (Col. i. 11).

How humbling is the bare reading of these words! He in whom it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, says truly to us: "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name; ask and receive, that your joy may be full." Let us expect God to cleanse us, to fill us, and to use us, not according to the worn and impoverished shekel of human tradition, but according to "the shekel of the Sanctuary." This He will do "*according to our faith*," for faith is the only power by which we translate spiritual realities into working energies.

### III. *Give Sanctuary Measure to the World.*

We cannot give this to men unless we first bring it to God and claim it from Him. Our capacity deter-

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mines the amount we receive, and therefore the amount we communicate.

We are made not only "a *holy* priesthood," but "a *royal* priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9). As "holy" we give Sanctuary measure to God, as "royal" we give Sanctuary measure to men. Peter and John were not only "holy" but "royal" priests, and the cripple who "gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them," was not disappointed. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts iii. 5, 6). A crippled world is longing for a race of royal priests, for men and women, in other words, who can meet its deep and urgent need with Sanctuary measure.

In the Gospel of Isaiah there is a promise that the soul of the believer shall be like a watered garden, and that he shall be like a spring of water, whose waters fail not (Isa. lviii. 11). The Hebrew word for "fail" is "lie or deceive." It is the picture of a thirsty caravan expecting to find water where it was found before, and discovering, to their unutterable disappointment, that the stream is dried. How often men have turned to us for spiritual refreshment, comfort, and inspiration, and turned to us in vain. The spring has deceived them, because, not bringing and claiming God's Sanctuary measure, we were out of touch with Him. No one was ever thus disappointed in the Master. He always gave "full measure, pressed down and running over." And so may we.



“ HOLY brethren, called and chosen by the sovereign Voice of Might,  
See your high and holy calling out of darkness into light !  
Called according to His purpose and the riches of His love ;  
Won to listen by the leading of the gentle heavenly Dove !

“ Called to suffer with our Master, patiently to run His race ;  
Called a blessing to inherit, called to holiness and grace ;  
Called to fellowship with Jesus, by the Ever-Faithful One ;  
Called to His eternal glory, to the kingdom of His Son.

“ Whom He calleth He preserveth, and His glory they shall see ;  
He is faithful that hath called you ; He will do it, fear not ye !  
*Therefore*, holy brethren, onward ! thus ye make your calling sure ;  
For the prize of this high calling, bravely to the end endure.”

—F. R. HAVERGAL.

## CHAPTER III

*"AS HE . . . SO YE"*

### A Life Partaking of the Divine Holiness

THOSE who are familiar with "The Ideal Life" will remember how strikingly Professor Drummond rings the changes upon the pronouns in the verse, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living" (1 Pet. i. 15). No one will dare for a moment to dispute the statement that the life "According to the Pattern" must be a life of Holiness. But what is Holiness? It is of the utmost importance that we should have a correct and not a false conception of what it is. "If our conception of Holiness is false," says Dr R. W. Dale, "our endeavours to become holy will take a wrong direction; our strength will be wasted; years of painful effort and struggle will come to nothing; and it will be well if our whole spiritual life does not sink into a dull indifference, or into the paralysis of despair. Or, if we have a false conception of Holiness, we may feel, from the very first, that our temperament, the conditions of our life, and our very duties—duties which, we are quite clear,

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cannot be renounced without guilt—render it impossible that the ideal should ever be fulfilled in our personal character.” \*

The proper meaning of the Hebrew word for holy (*qādōsh*) is uncertain. It may come from a root signifying “to shine”; or from another denoting “new and bright”; or from another meaning “to cut, to separate.” The chief idea appears to be not only that of separation, but the superiority or excellence in virtue of which the separation takes place. It is a word of inexhaustible significance. A brief study of the definitions which theologians have given us of this attribute of God will convince the student how utterly human definition fails to comprehend or exhaust the idea of the Divine Holiness. Of no other doctrine is that word of Christ’s truer. “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John vii. 17). In other words, it is only in a life of loving obedience and adoring fellowship that the Divine Holiness can be apprehended. “It is not,” as Robertson wisely says, “a chance fitful obedience that leads us to the Truth, nor an obedience paid while happiness lasts and no longer—but an obedience rendered in entirety and in earnest. If we are in earnest, we shall persevere like the Syrophenician woman, even though the ear of the universe seem deaf, and Christ Himself appear to bid us back. If we are not in earnest, difficulties will discourage us, and because will is wanting, we shall be asking still in ignorance and doubt, What is truth?”

That, surely, is the spirit of many of Charles

\* *The Congregationalist*, 1876, pp. 708, 709.

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Wesley's hymns, and no one will be sent empty away who feels that the poet voices his own desire when he says, for instance :

“ He wills that I should holy be,  
That holiness I *long* to feel ;  
That full Divine conformity  
To all my Saviour's righteous will.”

Or,

“ My *vehement* soul cries out opprest,  
Impatient to be freed ;  
Nor can I, Lord, nor will I rest,  
Till I am saved indeed.”

The word holy occurs in the Book of the Law hundreds of times. “In all of them the meaning is the same, and is clearly marked. Holy objects stand in a special relation to God as His property. Consequently, they are not man's. They have no human owner who can do with them as he pleases. None can touch them except at the bidding of God. Else, as we learn from Malachi iii. 8, they will be guilty of robbing God. The word HOLINESS is the inviolable Broad-Arrow of the Divine King of Israel.”\*

In Genesis the word never occurs. God revealed Himself to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old as El Shaddai. “I am God Almighty ; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Almightyness is the power to carry out the will of a Divine nature. “Shaddai” primarily means “*breasted*,” being derived from the Hebrew word “*shad*,” that is, “*the breast*.” “El Shaddai” is, then, the true Giver of His own life.

\* Dr Beet's “Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible,” pp. 17, 18.



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His Almightyness is that of overflowing, self-sacrificing love, giving and pouring itself out for others. Here is a foreshadowing of the New Testament doctrine of Holiness. Abram's hope of fulfilling this command, to walk before God and to be perfect, lay in the revelation of an Almightyness that makes His creatures like Himself, not by mere force, but by the bountiful outpouring of His own life.

The first mention of the word holy is in Exodus iii. 5, where, out of the midst of the bush, burning but not consumed, God called to Moses, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The word prefaces the introduction of "a covenant of which one great feature was to be Holiness embodied in visible places and things, a holiness which made the holy objects partly or altogether inaccessible to man." From this time there runs through the Scripture one clearly defined purpose: "Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that ye should be Mine" (Lev. xx. 26). "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 4-6).

Their relations to neighbouring nations, their dress, their food, their agriculture, their contact both with the living and the dead, were only so many voices

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saying: “Ye shall be holy unto Me.” The whole Jewish system was designed, by its endless purifications, purgations, sacrifices, festivals, and feasts, to remind the Jew that the name of the God whom he worshipped was Holy. The vast system of sacrifices—that to a modern utilitarian would have seemed such a needless waste—was intended to remind the Jew that the only way of approach to a Holy God was through sacrifice. So numerous were the daily washings and purifications, that a thoughtful Jew must often have heard the message that gave to irksome forms and ceremonies a new meaning—the message which fell from the lips of the Holy One Himself: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Let us ponder

### I. *The Call to Holiness.*

Man was originally made in the Divine image. The purpose to make a God-like creature was not set aside when man fell. If the creature will but co-operate with the Creator, the devices of the enemy shall be brought to naught, and man’s greatest glory—his resemblance to God—will be realised. Despite his independence and disobedience, man may still hear the Divine call. The apostle Paul speaks of those who are “the called according to His purpose.” Defining this call, he goes on to say: “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren” (Rom. viii. 29). In the words “conformed to the image of

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His Son" we have a compendium of that which is the purpose of God in the Church, viz., that the individual members, which go to make up the body of Christ, should in Christ Jesus become partakers of the Divine nature, that the Son of God might be the First-born among many brethren. Oh, to apprehend that for which we were apprehended of God in Christ Jesus! Ponder for a few moments the passages which speak of this Divine call. "God is faithful, by whom ye were *called* unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 9). A call to the participation of the very nature, immunities, privileges, and glory of His Son Jesus Christ. "He hath *chosen* (or *called*) us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him" (Eph. i. 4). Long before the great chaotic age, long before the geological eras began, long before the angel-fall, God beheld His final human race, perfect in His Son. Whatever we have become through the fall in heaven and the fall on earth, in Christ Jesus we are the holy children of eternity. "Our right home,"—as a great teacher recently gone from among us has said—"is in our Father's house, amid the first-born eternal glories. It is not strange, therefore, that there should be a spirit in us which refuses to rest in anything under the sun, as our final condition. When we turn from ourselves to our Saviour, we turn to our true nature. Hence our rest. 'Come to Me, and I will give you rest.' God's purpose to recover us and to make us holy, and our desire to be holy, are a strong working unity, and we shall surely be established

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in holiness before Him for ever.” “God *called* us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you” (1 Thess. iv. 7, 8). “The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly: and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that *calleth* you, who will also do it” (1 Thess. v. 23, 24). In both these passages we are reminded of the power which accompanies the call, and which will evermore leave us speechless and without excuse, for, as Miss Havergal loved to say, “all God’s biddings are enablings.” Every Divine command is conveyed to men in the form of power. Not to dwell longer on a wonderful array of passages in which this word is found, we will content ourselves with quoting that from which the heading of this chapter is derived: “Like as He which *called* you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living: because it is written, Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.”

There is infinite comfort underlying this word “called.” When God called Abram and said: “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee” (Gen. xii. 1), he had nothing to do but to obey the call. All the responsibility for directing, protecting, and providing for His servant was God’s. Obedience to the call was all God asked of Abram. And it is said: “So Abram went, as the Lord had spoken unto him.”

No man took the privileges and responsibilities of

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the priesthood upon himself, only such as were called of God. "The priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath *chosen* to minister unto Him" (Deut. xxi. 5). No nation could constitute itself a holy nation by its own act; holiness was, as we have seen, the prerogative of the elect race. "The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself" (Deut. vii. 6). No city could constitute itself a holy city. God spoke of Jerusalem as "the city which He had *chosen* out of all the tribes of Israel" (1 Kings xi. 32). No building could be made a Temple by the mere wish of those who erected it, or by enriching it with splendid ornaments, or by "consecrating" it with solemn and imposing ceremonies. The Temple was the place God had chosen, and of which He said, "For now have I *chosen* and hallowed this house, that My name may be there for ever" (2 Chron. vii. 16). No day could be made a holy day by the will of king, priest, or people; the holy days were those in the life of man which God had claimed as His own.

We can no more become holy apart from a Divine call than a man could, of his own will, constitute himself a priest. If God had not "chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," how could we ever hope to get beyond the wail of defeat: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" But He who has called us, has placed to our credit in Christ, every blessing of the Spirit (Eph. i. 3, 4); and it is easier for a man who has once recognised the Divine call, and has learned how to draw upon the Divine resources, to

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be a saint than a sinner, for both God and nature are in league against that foul intrusion of the devil which is called sin, and the way of transgressors is always hard.

It is ours to obey the call as Abraham did, and then to throw upon God the responsibility for all that the call involves. Having called me to be a saint, the whole energy of God's Omnipotence is at my disposal; and as the turning on of steam will suddenly wake up a whole mass of inert machinery, so the incoming of the Divine energy will make the feebleness of man to throb and pulsate with the might of God. Then the wail of defeat is changed into the shout of triumph: “I can do all things in Christ, who strengtheneth me.”

Anything short of this would be mockery. How can my living be brought into harmony with God's calling, if He leaves me, in my spiritual bankruptcy, to the making of bricks without straw? This would be absolutely contrary to the character of God, for He is ever consistent with Himself. He never commands what He does not require. He never requires where there is not ability to perform. Where there is a wing there is air; where there is a fin there is water; where there is an eye there is light; and where there is a Divine call there is always a Divine enabling.

O timid, faithless heart, shrinking from the very thought of answering to the call because of what is involved in a life of sanctity, hear what thy Father God says to thee: “FAITHFUL IS HE THAT CALLETH YOU, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT.”



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### II. *The Pattern of Holiness.*

The work of Christ was twofold. *First*, He came to reproduce in the world the lost image. The perfect life has been lived out in an environment that is one with our own. In the midst of poverty, persecution, opposition, temptation, and sin, a life of spotless Holiness has been lived. One has stood among us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, who was "the Express Image of God's person"; who could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." However much theologians may differ in their expositions of the Holiness of God, we see the full glory of that Holiness in Jesus Christ.

*Secondly*, Christ came to readjust our relations with the Divine Government, and to make atonement for our sin, that through death and resurrection He might impart His own life, as the life of the likeness of God. Paul's first Corinthian letter is addressed to those who "are made holy in Christ Jesus, called to be holy" (1 Cor. i. 2). We are in Him with a Divine Holiness, and in proportion to our obedience and appropriation, the Divine Holiness is manifested in all the conduct of a human life.

"*As He . . . so ye.*" There is not one standard of Holiness for God and another for man. The nature of Holiness remains the same whether it dwells in the Creator or in the creature, just as the nature of light is the same in the sun and in the candle. Christ has brought the Holiness of God nigh by translating it into the forms of human life and conduct, and when



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God calls us to Holiness He calls us to a participation of the life of His Son.

Charles Wesley once heard a foolish man declare in a love-feast, in a spirit and tone terribly bereft of humility, that he was “as holy as God.” The poet, after correcting a statement so likely to bewilder and prejudice those who heard it, went home and wrote these beautiful and judicious lines :

“Holy as Thou, O Lord, is none !  
Thy Holiness is all Thy own ;  
A drop of that unbounded sea  
Is ours, a drop derived from Thee.

“And when Thy purity we share,  
Thy only glory we declare ;  
And humbled into nothing own,  
Holy and pure is God alone.”

“*As He . . . so ye.*” *He* who lived a life of such absolute dependence on His Father that He could say, “The Son can do nothing of Himself”; *He* who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners ; *He* who made Himself of no reputation ; *He* whose forgiving love broke the heart of the man who denied Him ; *He* who washed the feet of the man who betrayed Him ; *He* who, even in His Gethsemane anguish, was able to say, “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt” ; *He* who on the Cross prayed for His murderers. “*As He . . . so ye.*” Does it seem impossible ? “The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.” That Perfect life cannot bear any other fruit. It must reproduce itself after its kind. Do men gather thorns of grapes ? If Christ is habitually

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put on and sanctified in the believer's heart as Lord, the mind that was in Him will be also in us, and "as He was, so shall we be in the world."

"In excavating the houses at Pompeii that were choked with dust and ash and lava streams two thousand years ago, the pick of the workman sometimes finds its way through the fused and solidified volcanic mass into a hollow space. He announces the fact to the director of the works, who then prepares plaster of Paris, and pours it into the mysterious void. After the plaster has set, the ash is broken away, and an image or perfect cast is found of some Roman man or woman who perished there twenty centuries ago. Every trace of the body has gone, clothes, flesh, bone are all destroyed; but the lava, hardening round the place where the figure once lay, has shaped itself into a faultless mould. And in God's economy do we not know of processes very much like that? The first life has perished. There is little or nothing left of man's original righteousness. The nature is a scene of black spiritual desolation. But at the core of all this desolation there are mysterious voids, significant solicitations, deep and clearly-defined wants. Let the Spirit of God diffuse life, love, sanctity, into these buried capabilities which wait to be filled, these abysmal wants which wait to be satisfied, and the picture of all that was Divine in unfallen man comes back again. 'Filled with all the fulness of God,' the lost symmetries of five or ten thousand years ago are revived, for the wonder of the world and the glory of God's power." \*

\* "The Lesson of a Dilemma," pp. 279, 280.

### III. *The Motives to Holiness.*

The first is that of obedience, “*Because* it is written, Be ye holy.” The three references to obedience in 1 Peter i. are worth noting. We are “chosen in sanctification of the Spirit unto *obedience*” (ver. 2). As “children of *obedience*” we are, negatively, not to conform ourselves to our former lusts, but, positively, to be holy, as He which calleth us, because it is written, “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (vers. 15, 16). The purification of our souls, says the apostle, is accomplished in our *obedience* to the truth (ver. 22). How much of the weakness and imperfection of the moral and spiritual life of many Christian people is due to an inadequate apprehension of the *authority* of Christ? What the apostles asked for was “the *obedience* of faith”; and the holy life not only, as we have seen, derives its *strength* from Christ, it is a life which also receives its *law* from Him. We have need to remember again the words of the Risen Christ: “All *authority* is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye *therefore*, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you.*” Dr Dale declared it as his conviction that, in the case of a very large number of persons who had been led to live a religious life by evangelical preaching, the recognition of Christ’s authority remained latent. He believed that the act of consecration was rather a response to the claims of the infinite love of Christ, and not to the

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claims of His righteous authority; the heart having more to do with it than the conscience, hence the character was in danger of becoming feeble and sentimental.

Holiness is not, then, a matter of choice or option; it is a Divine obligation, and the man or woman who calls God Father, and does not intensely long to be made a partaker of His Holiness, has no further claim to be reckoned among His obedient children, for there is no middle course between obedience and rebellion.

But secondly, because of its *blessedness*, God calls us to be holy. It is the noblest ideal we can conceive. Without it we cannot see or enjoy God. Without it there can be no sympathy, identity, or affinity with Him. Congenial natures attract, the opposites repel. We cannot therefore walk with God unless we are agreed, and only in Holiness can the race recover its lost fellowship with the Divine. The measure of our likeness to Him is the measure of His fellowship with us. God has nothing better to offer us than this. To quote the strong language of Professor Drummond, "The best God can do with men is to make them like Himself. The whole earth is His, and He would have it all in harmony with Himself. God has a right to demand that we should be holy just because He is holy Himself. To take even the lowest ground, we allow no ornaments in our house that are not lovely and pleasant to the eye. We have no business to encumber God's earth with ourselves if we are not holy—no business to live in the same world with

## “AS HE . . . SO YE”

Him. We are an offence to God—discordant notes in the music of the universe. Our sanctification is not in books, or in a noble enthusiasm, or in personal struggles after a better life. It is in the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. It is not a thing to be generated, but to be *received*. It is not to be generated in fragments of experience at one time and another—it is already complete in Christ. We have only to put on Christ. The sanctification, whenever it comes, can only come from Christ, and if we are ever sanctified, it will only be because and inasmuch as we have Christ. Our sanctification is not what the Bible gives, not even what Christ gives, it is what Christ *lives*. It is Christ Himself. ‘Ye are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power.’ ‘He is made of God unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption’ (1 Cor. i. 30). ‘*As ye have therefore received the Lord Jesus, so walk ye in Him.*’” \*

“Holiness by *faith* in Jesus, not by *effort* of thine own ;  
Sin’s dominion crushed and broken, by the power of grace  
alone ;  
God’s own holiness within thee, His own beauty on thy  
brow ;  
This shall be thy pilgrim brightness, this thy blessed portion  
now.”

\* “The Ideal Life and other Addresses,” pp. 292-295.

“ THE race of God’s anointed priests shall never pass away ;  
Before His glorious Face they stand, and serve Him night and day.  
Though reason raves, and unbelief flows on, a mighty flood,  
There are, and shall be till the end, the hidden priests of God.  
His chosen souls, their earthly dross consumed in sacred fire,  
To God’s own heart their hearts ascend in flame of deep desire ;  
The incense of their worship fills His temple’s holiest place ;  
Their song with wonder fills the heavens, the glad new song of grace.”

—G. TERSTEEGEN.

“ THE Great Vine left its glory to reign as Forest King,  
While the forest swayed and murmured like seas that are tempesting :  
Stooped and drooped, with thousand tendrils, in thirsty languishing ;  
Bowed to earth and lay on earth for earth’s replenishing.  
Put off sweetness, tasted bitterness, endured time’s fashioning ;  
Put off life, and put on death : and lo ! it was all to bring  
All its fellows down to a death which hath lost the sting,  
All its fellows up to a life in endless triumphing,—  
I a king, and thou a king ; and this King to be our King.”

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

## CHAPTER IV

### *THE ABIDING ANOINTING*

#### A Life in the Power of the Spirit

**B**UT the anointing does not always abide! Through lack of obedience, or still more frequently through lack of faith, it is lost, and God's anointed ones find themselves weak as other men. Then follows a longer or shorter period of formal and unfruitful service. Earnestness abides, zeal abides, activity abides, but the work is no longer done by virtue of the anointing. The Christian shakes himself, Samson-like, as at other times, and wists not that the anointing has departed from him, but instructed Christians know that the energy of the flesh has more to do with the activities than the energy of the Spirit.

A subtle temptation presents itself when the loss of spiritual power is detected: the temptation to make efforts to produce an effect, or to substitute a false spirituality. But no amount of simulated fervour, however clever the imitation, can achieve the effects of the anointing from the Holy One. The one is natural, the other is supernatural. The one is human,



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the other is Divine. The penalty, under the Mosaic Law, of imitating the holy anointing oil was death (Exod. xxx. 33).

The study of this subject brings us, as in the last chapter, face to face with an experience that is not optional but obligatory. Having accepted Christ's atonement as sufficient for salvation, we have no option but to accept the Spirit's anointing as sufficient for service. It is time, at any rate, that we recognised Christ's precepts to be more than mere counsels: they are *laws* issued by an authority to which every man is responsible. Being assembled with His disciples after His resurrection, "*He charged them* not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from Me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts i. 4, 5).

"The Mastership of Jesus Christ," says Dr Pierson, "lies at the basis of all service. He was crucified to bring to men atonement sufficient to save, but He was glorified to send men equipment sufficient to serve. The Mastership of Jesus Christ implies spiritual endowment and enduement, or the gifts of the Spirit's bestowment, and the equipment of power for the service to be rendered." \*

All this will become clear if we diligently study the subject now before us in the light of God's complete revelation. "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we

\* "The Heights of the Gospel," p. 183.

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know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us. And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as His anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in Him" (1 John ii. 18-20, 26, 27).

There is a striking antithesis here. The antichrists were antagonistic to the Holy One; "*ye*" have an anointing from Him. By receiving this anointing they became joint-christs, while those who set at naught this anointing were antichrists. When the Scriptures speak of Christian men as being anointed, it really speaks of them as being Messiahs. The distinctive name for Christ in the Old Testament was *The Messiah*, which means the Anointed One; in the New Testament the corresponding name of the Lord is *Christ*, which also means the Anointed One. How suggestive the apostle's words become when the meaning of the anointing is pondered. By derived authority, and in a subordinate, though none the less real sense, we are the Messiahs of the New Dispensation, the Christs of God. He was called *Christ*, we are called *Christians*, the anointed followers of the Anointed One. God's chosen people were the Messiahs of the

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Old Dispensation, and the Divine arm suffered no man to do them wrong, saying, "Touch not Mine anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm" (Ps. cv. 15).

In the Old Dispensation the anointing was the official inauguration into three of the highest offices of the Hebrew nation: the prophetic (1 Kings xix. 16), the priestly (Lev. xvi. 32), the kingly (1 Sam. ix. 16). These three offices were, of course, typical of a great personality to come in the fulness of the times, and all that the anointing foreshadowed in history and symbol and ritual received its fulfilment in the Christ of God. He took the roll in the synagogue of Nazareth, and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the roll, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke iv. 18-22). In the house of Cornelius, Peter declared that Jesus of Nazareth was *anointed* by God with the Holy Ghost and with power, and that He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38). "Of the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever

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and ever; and the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, Thy God, hath *anointed* Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Heb. i. 8, 9). He is anointed *above* "His fellows," for there was none like Him; but we *are* "His fellows" in this as in all besides, and therefore become partakers of His anointing and His joy. This thing is true in Him and in us. The language used of God's Incarnate Son may, without presumption, be applied to and used of God's adopted sons. The Father anoints; the Son is the Anointed; the Holy Ghost is the anointing (Acts x. 38). He who was anointed with the Holy Ghost now anoints His people. The oil which was poured upon the Head flows down upon the members of the body: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear" (Acts ii. 33).

The truth we are most anxious to emphasise is that what was in the Old Dispensation conferred upon prophets, priests, and kings, and in the New Dispensation upon Christ, is now conferred upon us in our union with Him. Westcott says: "In apostolic language each Christian is in due measure himself a Christ, empowered by the gift of the Holy Spirit to announce the truth which he has learnt, to apply the Atonement which he has received, and to establish the kingdom which he believes to be universal." Just as by obedient faith we participate in the Holiness of Christ, in like manner we

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participate in His Anointing. It is the highest honour man can receive; it is the most precious gift Jesus can bestow. And this unique bestowment is not for a favoured few, as in Old Testament days; it may be shared by all true disciples, however humble and obscure, through all the days: "This honour have all the saints."

Without it there may be power, but it will not be from on high; there may be unctuousity, but that is not unction; there may be light, but there will not be fire. What wonder that the opponents of Christianity talk so loudly of its failure, when, in so many cases, the adherents and champions of the Christian faith are strangers to the power by which it is distinguished from all other systems of religion, viz., the power of the Holy Ghost.

### I. *The Priestly Anointing is for all.*

Imagine, if you can, a priest attempting to minister before the Lord, daring to touch the holy things of the Sanctuary without having, first of all, been sprinkled with holy anointing oil. God was so jealous of the sanctity of those who *had* been anointed, that the penalty of failing to wash the hands and the feet, when they ministered before the Lord, was death (Exod. xxx. 19-21). What, then, but death must have been the penalty of such presumption as that which we have suggested?

The ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priests' office was not intended to supersede the priesthood of the people, but was rather an acknowledgment of it. The consecrated priests were the representa-

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tives of the nation, acting in its name, and offering sacrifices on its behalf. Although the specialised priesthood was a necessity, it was nevertheless a retrogression from the more perfect ideal of a priesthood which belonged to manhood. In the New Testament Church the ministerial and teaching office was specialised and localised in particular individuals amongst the whole body of believers (see 1 Cor. xiv.). But when such arrogant claims are being made among us, it is necessary to say that there is no "priestly" caste in the New Testament Church, which has any office or prerogative, that may not on occasion, at the call of God, be exercised by any member of a Church. Every "lay-preacher," every "Sunday-school teacher," every "mission-band worker," keeps up the needful protest that the teaching and evangelising function is no special right of any clerical order. "In the Christian Church manhood-priesthood is again the order; the original order—obscured by the episodic priesthood and ritual of Mosaic Law—is now once more brought into prominence and use. The priesthood is inherent in every "*anointed*," every "*spiritual*" man.\*

The anointing with oil was the outward and visible sign of the impartation to the priests of those gifts and graces which qualified them for being the ministers of the Lord, the teachers, guides, and intercessors of the people. Never were priests of whom it can be said, "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One," more needed than to-day. Men and women, attempting priestly service without

\* "Preacher's Homiletic Commentary," Corinthians, p. 400.



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priestly anointing, abound ; but God is in extremity for those who have had such a vision, both of the might that is working from beneath and of their own natural impotence, that they dare not go forth to labour until, in all humility and confidence, they are able to say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." And is not His extremity our opportunity?

We have not space to show in detail how most of the duties of the Old Testament priesthood have their counterpart in these privileged days. What a field of service is opened by the ministry of *intercession* ! The Levitical priests were links of communion between heaven and earth, spokesmen and intermediaries for those who, because of sin, could not approach the Holy One of Israel. The anointed believer has no more precious privilege than this.\* Christ in heaven, His people on earth, making intercession for the world, is the world's hope ; and if the race of God's anointed priests were removed out of the world, the very world itself would account it no small calamity and curse. Precious beyond all price is a place in the intercessions of one who has received an anointing from the Holy One. Just before General Gordon started, as he believed, for the Congo, he sent to a prayer-meeting over which a well-known clergyman was presiding, asking for the prayers of those assembled. He said in his letter : "*I would rather have the prayers of that little company gathered in your house to-day than I would have the wealth of the Soudan placed at my disposal.* Pray for me, that I may have humility and the guidance of God,

\* For a fuller treatment of this subject, see chapter on Intercession.



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and that all spirit of murmuring may be rebuked in me." When he reached London on his return from Brussels, and his destination was changed, the General sent another message: "Offer thanks at your next prayer-meeting. When I was upborne on the hearts of those Christians, I received from God the spiritual blessing that I wanted, and I am now calmly resting in the current of His will."

Another sacrifice which only the anointed priest can offer is the sacrifice of *continual praise*. "Through Him let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15). Just as fruit is the natural product of a healthy tree, so praise is the natural product of a life made holy with the Holiness of Jesus, and anointed with His Spirit.

Here is an unerring criterion of Christian character. He who has saved us to the uttermost claims that we shall continually show forth His praises; and the fruit of the lips is the unfailing test of the depth and healthiness of our Christian life. Mark the word *continually*. There is no room for complaint or repining; for fretfulness or discontent; for impatience or irritability. They who breathe the atmosphere of the Holiest find no material there for a murmuring and discontented mind to feed upon. You may be sure that the man or woman who perpetually pours out a string of complaints is not realising the privileges of an anointed priest. He who lives within the veil takes his trials to God in communion, and not to man in complaint. He

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is always bright and happy, continually offering the sacrifice of praise.

### II. *The Prophetic Anointing is for all.*

"Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye all know" (see R.V., margin). Here John is speaking of Christian men as prophets, that is as enlightened by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Probably many who were in the Church had become ensnared by anti-Christian error, and had departed from the faith they once avowed. Is there any preservative against apostasy? What makes the difference between being merely *in* the Church and being also *of* it? The answer is here. "And *ye* have an anointing." The "*ye*" is emphatic. *Ye* by virtue of this anointing know. Under the Old Dispensation a select few knew, for only the guides and leaders and teachers were anointed; but to every child of God this anointing, which is the birthright of all, brings such knowledge as will enable him to escape from the snares of the antichrist. They who have claimed their portion of the anointing which the Head has received for His members, have such a vision of the spiritual world as makes it as real as the world of sense, enabling them immediately to detect between the truth or falsehood that is told about it.

This anointing quickens the spiritual senses, rendering them as keen in their perception of the facts of the spiritual world as by the physical senses men perceive the facts of the material world. Sin renders these spiritual senses inactive, but under the anointing of

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the Holy Spirit they are purified, clarified, intensified. The anointed Christian moves in a kingdom unknown to others. The anointing enables him to perceive the path of duty where others only see confusion ; to detect the presence of good or evil where others do not ; to feel the warmth or the ice in the midst of a congregation of worshippers ; “to feel the temperature of the social current in which he moves, as readily as a sailor can detect the warmth of the Gulf Stream or the chill of icebergs. No one can describe the subtle, ethereal, rapid movement of the inner senses when acting under the fulness of God’s love.”

But the true prophet is not only one who sees but who *speaks*. The word witness comes from the Saxon *witan*, “to know,” and a witness needs but two characteristics, knowledge and utterance. The prophet is not now so much one who *foretells* as one who *forth-tells*. He sings :

“What I have *felt* and *seen*,  
With confidence I *tell* ;  
And publish to the sons of men  
The signs infallible.”

Delivered from error, doubt, hesitancy, and uncertainty by this anointing that teacheth “concerning all things, and is true and is no lie,” the anointed prophet speaks with an authority—I had almost written with a dogmatism—which impresses and convicts. Never did the world need more than to-day men and women with strong convictions about spiritual realities. “Give us your convictions,” says Goethe ; “as for your doubts, we have quite enough of our own.” The commission of the Pentecostal Church is the tongue

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of fire to talk to all the world. The Old was the sacrificing Dispensation; the New is the speaking Dispensation. On the heads of the disciples in the Upper Room there rested cloven tongues, which were also tongues of *fire*, to show to them and to the world that the testimony of the great prophetic host, of whom these were but the advance guard, was to be attended by a new force, an energy Divine, which would burn its way into the hearts and consciences of men. "Oh that," in this New Testament sense, "all the Lord's people were prophets!"

### III. *The Kingly Anointing is for all.*

"One hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, And didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. . . . But now we see not yet all things subjected to him. But we behold . . . Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 6-9). Here we see man's kingship lost in Adam but restored in Jesus. Sin has discrowned him, and the sceptre has fallen from his grasp. Losing his purity he lost his power; losing his character he lost his royalty; and looking at man out of Christ, his passions often insurgent against his principles, his appetites warring against his aspirations, it sounds more like irony than truth to speak of man as a king. But his crown has been recovered, and "Unto Him that loved us, and washed

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us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever" (Rev. i. 5, 6). "They that receive *the abundance of grace* shall reign in life" (Rom. v. 17). They shall reign over their *temperament*. He, from whom God's kings derive their authority, who has won back the lost crown only that man may be a king in the little monarchy of his own nature, knows how to strengthen the weakest parts of that nature, making the sphere of human weakness the place for the manifestation of the Divine might. The moment of our absolute submission to the King is the moment of our coronation. In union with Him we are constituted kings, and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit we receive from Him the kingly spirit, and live the regnant life before the world. As the anointing abides we obtain, by appropriating and assimilating faith, heavenly calmness for irritability, heavenly patience for impatience, heavenly meekness for pride, heavenly gentleness for natural austerity and sharpness.

They who "receive the abundance of grace reign" also over their *circumstances*. They derive their monarchy from the King who *makes* circumstances. "God give you a good day, my friend," said Tauler of Strasburg to a beggar whom he met at a time when he was seeking a deeper knowledge of God. "I thank God," said the beggar, "I never have a bad day." Tauler, astonished, changed the form of his salutation. "God give you a happy life, friend." "I thank God," said the beggar, "I am

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*never unhappy.*" "Never unhappy!" said Tauler; "what do you mean?" "Well," rejoined the beggar, "when it is fine, I thank God; when it rains, I thank God; when I have plenty, I thank God; when I am hungry, I thank God; and since God's will is my will, and whatsoever pleases Him pleases me, why should I say I am unhappy when I am not?" "But what," said Tauler, "if God were to cast you hence into hell—how then?"

Whereat the beggar paused a moment, and then, lifting his eyes upon him, he answered, "And if He did, I should have two arms to embrace Him with—the arm of my faith, wherewith I lean upon His holy humanity; and the arm of my love, wherewith I am united to His ineffable Deity; and thus one with Him, He would descend thither with me, and there would I infinitely rather be with Him than anywhere else without Him." "But who are you?" said Tauler, taken aback by the sublimity of the reply. "I am a king," said the beggar. "A king!" said Tauler; "where is your kingdom?" "In my own heart," said the beggar. Such kings can sing,—

"To do, or not to do; to have  
Or not to have, I leave to Thee:  
To be or not to be, I leave;  
Thy only will be done in me!  
All my requests are lost in one,  
'Father, Thy only will be done.'"

They that receive the abundance of grace reign also over *their fellows*. In the presence of God's true kings, foul language and foul doing hide themselves and are ashamed. Goodness declares itself,



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and cowards become brave in their presence. It is quite true, as Dr Maclaren says, that "the men around you will bow in submission whenever they come into contact with a man all aflame with the love of Jesus, and filled with His Spirit. The world is hard and rude; the world is blind and stupid; the world often fails to know its best friends and its truest benefactors; but there is no crust of stupidity so crass and dense, but that through it there will pass the penetrating shafts of light that ray from the face of a man who walks in fellowship with Jesus."

In concluding our study of this important subject, there are three points to be specially remembered:—

(a) This spiritual anointing is an experience to be definitely prayed for and definitely claimed. The word "*received*," in 1 John ii. 27, is in the aorist tense, denoting singleness of act. It is "received" of Him, when the conditions are met, in an instant of time, and, like the anointing of the priest or king under the Old Covenant, is an *act* and not a *process*. There are two primary conditions—*obedience* (Acts v. 32) and *faith* (Gal. iii. 14). The anointing never comes upon those who live in wilful disobedience, or upon those who, at the moment of presenting their request, say, "I doubt Thee."

(b) The anointing *abides* in us as long as we heed the injunction to "abide in Him" (1 John ii. 27). When the Comforter comes to take up His abode in His chosen temple—a human heart—He *intends* to abide. There is nothing changeable or capricious about Him. "I will pray the Father," said Jesus, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He



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may be with you *for ever*" (John xiv. 16). Unbelief will hinder the putting forth of His power; want of recognition will hurt and disappoint Him; and wilful sin will cause Him to depart in grief.

(c) The anointing gives *stability*: "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God" (2 Cor. i. 21). Here is the cure for our fickleness and instability. Why should the glowing flame so soon become a heap of dead ashes; why should the Divine aroma be so quickly lost; why should the holy tide begin so soon to ebb, when the Divine anointing is given to fix our wills in obedience, and to stablish us *into* Christ?

"When shall I see the welcome hour,  
That plants my God in me!  
Spirit of health, and life, and power,  
And perfect liberty!

"Jesus, Thine all-victorious love  
Shed in my heart abroad;  
Then shall my feet no longer rove,  
Rooted and fixed in God.

"My steadfast soul, from falling free,  
Shall then no longer move;  
But Christ be all the world to me,  
And all my heart be love."



“OH what a heaven is Love—Divine, infinite, unfathomable Love. Who can describe the happiness of those who have leapt from the verge of the crumbling precipice of sin and self into the blue ocean of Divine Love, and have lost themselves therein? Who can describe the peace of those who have pushed off from the shore and committed their bark to the river of God’s grace to be carried wherever it wills? Who can describe the rest of those in whom all resistance to the will of God, all unbelief towards the Spirit of Holiness, has ceased; and who have yielded themselves up to the exclusive control of the *attraction* of Love, choosing the invisible, limitless God as their home and their portion forever, renouncing all earthly foothold, prop, or stay, in order to find their all in Him?”—ARTHUR BOOTH-CLIBBORN.

“WHAT is the beginning? Love. What the course? Love still.  
What the goal? The goal is Love on the happy hill.  
Is there nothing then but Love, search we sky or earth?  
There is nothing out of Love hath perpetual worth:  
All things flag, but only Love, all things fail or flee;  
There is nothing left but Love worthy you and me.”

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

“TRULY God has bound Himself by Love’s sweet constraint to make us capable of a Love that is similar to His own; that is to share the highest of all things with us to the full. The self-sacrificing Love that began in God must also go on in us. By every means, our hearts must be made capable of possessing and reciprocating it all. God knows how sweet it is to love and to be loved. And so the glory that He gave to Jesus—the supreme glory of self-sacrificing Love—He has given also even to us, that we may be one in Love even with the Father and the Son. Having therefore equipped us with this highest power, He lays on us the command which—enforced by His example—finds such an echo in our hearts. ‘Above *all* things have fervent love among yourselves!’”—FRANK W. CROSSLEY.

## CHAPTER V

### *THE LIVERY OF CHRIST*

#### A Life of Divine Love

FEW men have ever worn this livery as conspicuously as did the saintly Samuel Rutherford of Anworth. One Saturday evening, so the story runs, his household were gathered together for their usual Saturday night's devotions, when a knock was heard at the outer door. A stranger sought admission. He was welcomed with true hospitality, and took his place in the circle of those who were then answering the varied questions in the catechism. It so chanced that the question, "How many commandments are there?" came to this new-comer, as the one to which he was to make reply, and instantly he answered, "Eleven." "What!" said Rutherford; "a man so experienced in life as you seem to be, and so educated in the law and the Scriptures of God, not to know that there are but ten commandments!" The stranger answered, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." Startled by the answer, Rutherford proceeded with his service. The next morning, before the hour of worship, he walked from

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his humble manse along the pathway which is still spoken of as "Rutherford's Walk" towards the little church. It was early in the day, and he scarcely expected to meet anyone in the path; but over in the wood he heard the voice of someone in supplication. The moment he listened he recognised the stranger's tone. He sought him out, and demanded to know who he was. The stranger answered, "My name is Usher." He was the Archbishop and Primate of Ireland. Having heard so much of the piety of Samuel Rutherford, he had, in this secret way, sought his society that he might judge for himself. Their hearts flowed together in the common devotion which they both felt toward the Lord Jesus, their Master; and when the hour of service came, the saintly preacher of Anworth and the prelate walked to the little church, and the archbishop preached on the words, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have Love one to another" (John xiii. 34, 35). It is needless to say that the presence of the primate, his welcome, his spirit, and his words were a harmonious exposition of the eleventh commandment.

Love is the badge of discipleship, and through all the ages it is to distinguish the followers of Jesus from all other schools, creeds, and combinations of men. The Pharisee was known by his broad phylactery, the Sadducee by his contempt for ritual, the priests and scribes by their peculiar robes, the Roman citizen by his toga, the soldier by his helmet, but Jesus

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instituted a new order. "As every lord giveth a certain livery to his servants," says Latimer, "Love is the livery of Christ." By this token do all men take knowledge of us that we belong to Him.

How is it possible, in the presence of so many conflicting claims, to identify the true Church? The Greek Church claims lineal descent from the Church of the Apostles. The Romish Church declares her keys to be those which alone open the Kingdom of Heaven. Armenian, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Independent, Baptist, all put in their claim. How is the Church of Christ to be infallibly known? "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have Love one to another." True Christians love one another across denominational barriers, and exhibit the spirit of Him who gave Himself to death upon the Cross, that His murderers might live. "This is that evidence," says George Bowen, "that none shall be able to resist. When Christians love one another with the Love of Calvary, then the people who dwell in the heart of Africa, Australia, China, Japan, Tartary, Siberia, Arabia, Russia, Austria, America, and England will know who are the people of God, and will hasten to them, ten men laying hold upon the skirts of one, to learn the way of life."

Let us consider

### *I. The Origin of this Love.*

One of the chief reasons why this badge of Christian discipleship is so seldom seen in all its distinctive beauty is the failure to recognise the fact that it is a

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Divine and not a human product. Love is a heaven-born exotic ; it is the Love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost (Rom. v. 5). It is as impossible to love by a resolve to love as it is to move a boat by pressing it from within. When conscious of cooled affections, there are those who attempt, by self-reproach and self-effort, to remove the shameful coldness. But just as no man can inspire himself,—inspiration being a breath and a life coming from without,—so no man can compel himself to love. The excitement caused by the struggle of the creature ends sooner or later in exhaustion, and in a return to the former coldness. The Love the world is looking for, longing for, nay, dying for, is the Love of God shed abroad in human hearts by the Holy Spirit.

How boundless and beneficent that Love is! All creation may bask in its warmth without anyone lessening the portion of another. It is inexhaustible, although it fills the universe ; and when the universe is full, it is still whole and undiminished. The rose that absorbs the red rays in the light is able to drink them in as if no other flower existed ; and the individual soul may open all its gates to the Love of God as though there were no other creature in the universe ; neither is the reservoir of that Divine Love diminished by this lavish outpouring.

“ There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs,  
None loves them best—O vain and selfish sigh!  
Out of the bosom of His love He spares—  
The Father spares the Son, for *thee* to die :  
For *thee* He died—for *thee* He lives again :  
O'er *thee* He watches in His boundless reign.



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“*Thou* art as much His care, as if beside  
Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth :  
Thus sunbeams pour alike their glorious tide  
To light up worlds, or wake an insect’s mirth :  
They shine and shine with unexhausted store—  
Thou art thy Saviour’s darling—seek no more.” \*

Dr Charles Watson throws a flood of light on the words: “Which thing”—*i.e.*, which New Commandment—“is true in Him and in you” (1 John ii. 8). He says the word “*true*” here means that which *fits*, as a key the lock which it opens, or a medicine the disease which it heals, or a plan the difficulty it solves. That in short which puts things right that are wrong, which, disentangling confusion, brings about order, knitting together broken links, making useful that which without it is useless, or beautiful that which by itself is uncomely. In other words, the great law of Love fits into the facts, the realities of human nature in the best way, giving it a finished beauty, and putting into it that which it lacked for smooth working.† But before that which is true in Him can become true in us, the heart *must* be delivered, by faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus, from that contrary principle—Sin; the carnal nature *must* be deposed; the vail of the flesh *must* be rent; then we shall know the full incoming of the Love of which the Holy Spirit is the possessor and bearer.

But how can I be brought into such relations with God so as to love Him as I desire? Only by remembering that “God is Love.” If my heart is longing for Love I must seek God, for Love is the

\* *The Christian Year*, Monday before Easter.

† “First Epistle of John,” p. 64.

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very nature of God. The Love I need is GOD HIMSELF coming into my heart, taking possession of my whole nature, and filling it with His Love, because He has filled it with Himself.

The components of Love, as an affection in exercise towards God, are Esteem and Desire. The measure of our love to God will, therefore, be the degree in which we know Him. Men read and wonder at the rapturous exclamations of Rutherford in his "Letters," but they are explained by his knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ. "Oh! if ye *knew* Him, and saw His beauty, your love, your liking, your heart, your desire would close with Him, and cleave to Him. Love, by nature, when it seeth, cannot but cast out its spirit and strength upon amiable objects, and good things, and things love-worthy; and what fairer thing than Christ? I would seek no more to make me happy for evermore, but a thorough and clear sight of the beauty of Jesus my Lord. Let my eyes enjoy His fairness, and stare Him for ever in the face, and I have all that can be wished. Get Christ rather than gold or silver; seek Christ, howbeit ye should lose all things for Him."\*

The more intimate our acquaintance with God, the more we shall discover in Him to call forth our admiration, for in Him is all loveliness and perfection. Apart from His moral perfections, and chiefly His benevolence, Love would be impossible, even towards God. Power without Love would be tyrannous and destructive; Wisdom without Love would be mischievous cunning. A being possessed of infinite

\* "Rutherford's Letters," large edition, vol. ii. p. 35.

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Knowledge without Love would be the terror of the entire creation. No greater words were ever written than "God is Love," and it is the remembrance of this sublime truth that inspires us with confidence, and makes all God's other perfections precious to us, because they are exerted on our behalf. We love Him not only for what He is in Himself, but also for what His Love makes Him.

For more than half a century the Apostle of Love had been contemplating with adoring gratitude the Love of God, and as he meditates upon it he exclaims, "Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" (1 John iii. 1). The word *πόσις*, translated "manner," means literally "of what country." Passing through the streets of the Metropolis, you may sometimes see a man whose face and dress distinguish him as a Chinaman; the appearance of another bespeaks his African birth; another is evidently a native of the sunny South. But here is one whose dress and features are entirely unfamiliar, and as you gaze at him curiously, you inquire from what country he hails. That will perhaps serve to illustrate this familiar verse. From what country is such Love? It is of no earthly origin. The blight and barrenness of this lower world could never produce so rare a plant. It is the Love of Heaven come down to earth. Divine Love was clothed with flesh that He might identify Himself with the life of humanity, and tabernacle permanently among men. He ascended to the throne of heaven that, having given a new commandment, He might by the Holy Spirit also give to His

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redeemed the heart to obey it. Manifested in the flesh, He is now manifested in the Church wherever men and women are found who will find heart-room for the Love of God now shed abroad by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit poured forth at Pentecost is the Spirit of Love. A personal Pentecost is the answer to that wonderful petition in the High-Priestly prayer of Jesus, "that the Love wherewith Thou hast loved ME may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 26). What a request! Think of the affection of God for Jesus. The Love of the Father was the Saviour's heaven. It was His comfort in human loneliness; it was His bulwark in human weakness; it was His satisfaction in human disappointment; it was His victory in temptation; it was His support when deserted; it was His one ray of light amid the darkness of Calvary. He longs to share with us the Love God gave to Him; and so He prays that in response to our growing faith His Father will regard us even as He regarded Him. What vistas of blessedness open before us! In order that our lives might be fashioned according to the Pattern, Christ has given us His peace, His joy, His Name, His *all*, even to the Love of the Father. He lived, loved, suffered, died, not merely that we might ascend with Him to glory, but that the Love of God might descend and rest on us, even as it had rested on Him. "There is nothing better in heaven than what Christ here requests for His people. About to depart out of the world, He entreats that the Love which had so unceasingly and mightily flowed toward Him during all His pilgrimage here below might not depart with

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Him and be lost to earth—that the same benignity and complacency, and tenderness and sympathy that had looked down to Him from the throne of heaven, might continue to look down upon the earth, even upon those that believed on His name. We expect God some day to love us even as He loves His only-begotten. Christ does not ask this for us some day, but *now*. The Atonement of Christ has the value *now* that it will have in any future day. The blood that was shed on Calvary does not begin by purchasing for us a little love, and then, like the merchandise of this world, rising in value, end by purchasing the whole.” \*

This Love is not simply exhibited towards believers. It is “*bestowed upon them*.” It is “infused into them,” as Westcott has it; put into their very being, becoming in them the source of a Divine life. The Love of God, seeking Jesus, finds Him in His disciples upon the earth. It follows then, if Christ has full possession of my nature, that when I draw near to the throne of Grace I encounter, by virtue of His indwelling, the full tide of the Father’s Love. God’s everlasting Love is *towards* me and *in* me, not because there is anything in me to love, but because Christ is in me. And so the prayer is answered, “That the Love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and *I in them*.”

### II. *The Pattern of this Love.*

A form or pattern on which to gaze mentally, and to which to conform our life, is as necessary to us as

\* Bowen’s “Love Revealed,” p. 394.

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the Pattern which God showed Moses was to Bezaleel when constructing the Tabernacle. He had the three essential things: the Command, the Pattern, and the Power (Exod. xxxi. 1-12). Christ's Love is to be our model. We are to love one another, "*As I have loved you*" (John xiii. 34). "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you*" (John xv. 12). "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, *even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself* up for you, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Eph. v. 1, 2). The word translated "followers" in the Authorised Version is derived from *mimōs*, a "*mimic*," suggesting the closest imitation. Christ sacrificed Himself for us that He might be a perfect copy of God. If therefore we imitate God, we must walk in love, as Christ loved us. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk, *even as He walked*" (1 John ii. 6). The Beauty of the Lord our God is seen in the life and death of Jesus, and that beauty becomes ours as our lives are conformed to the Divine Pattern. In possessing Him is all our wealth and joy; in reflecting Him lies all our beauty.

Love has its highest revelation in the Cross. The spirit we behold on the Cross is the spirit of heaven, and in proportion as this spirit possesses us, heaven will be in us. Heaven is the joy of a perfectly harmonised being filled with God and His Love, and the soul who has found room for God and His Love has found room for heaven, for God is Love, and Love is heaven.



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The law of Love, as Christ lived it and taught it, goes far beyond the familiar law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*," *i.e.*, *as much*, but not more. Christ calls us to love *as He loved*. His was a Love that emptied itself, humbled itself, sacrificed itself, had no thought of itself. It was a Love that made itself heir to all the sins and sorrows of the world, and that found its highest joy in bearing the burdens of the weary and heavy-laden. John says in chapter iii. 16, that we only know what Love really is by seeing it in Him as He laid down His life for us.

Instead of taking His Love with Him from the earth, God has provided, as we have seen, for its continuance, so that the Divine Pattern of Love may be reproduced in the life of every true disciple. We might well despair in the presence of such commands if the Love of God had only come down for a season, and then had ascended again to the throne of God. It is to take its place abidingly in the stream of humanity, though in what measure depends upon our assimilating faith. The Love-life of Jesus is to be seen in the followers of Jesus, and when men see it there they will immediately recognise the livery of Christ, and know that we are His disciples. The vocation of every believer is to be "a revelator of the Love of Christ," and if we are as intent upon this as Christ is, what a wonderful response there will be, not only to this but to all our petitions, for by our obedience to this commandment we shall prove ourselves to be His friends (John xv. 12-14).

Love was the principle of Christ's life. It was not a mere incident, it was the essence of His life. Love



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was the inspiration of His life. The Love of God so mightily constrained Him that it was said of Him, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." It was not a sentimental Love that says, "Be ye warmed and filled and comforted," but a Love so practical and costly that it was ceaselessly giving of its best. He loved not only with benevolence—that is wishing well; or with pity, which is Love to those who are suffering; but with mercy, that is with love to those who did not deserve Love. As He descended in Love from the highest heights to unutterable depths, so must we descend to any place, however vile, where "less than the least of all saints" is lying; to any spot to which Jesus Himself would come if He were here; to touch the most loathsome disease; to come into contact with the foulest sin; to wash the feet of the poorest of the saints; to serve the mind, the body, or the soul. We are to "Walk in Love, even as Christ loved us and gave HIMSELF up for us." We shall not therefore attempt to buy ourselves off from personal service by proxies, substitutes, or gifts, but we shall give *ourselves*.

Jesus is at once our Lawgiver, our Pattern, and our Power, for how can human nature ever approach such heights and depths of Love as this? With man it is impossible; but the very object of the Incarnation was to confer upon all who choose to be disciples of Christ a Divine nature, that they might be lifted out of the sphere of the human, and, breathing the atmosphere of heaven, might live before their fellows as veritable sons of God. This is a law for the New Creation alone, and it can only be

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obeyed when we know His name to be Emmanuel, God with us.

### III. *The Manifestation of this Love.*

Divine Love is the life-blood of the mystical body, ministered by the Spirit from the Head in heaven, uniting, energising, and nourishing all the parts of the body. It is the mightiest of all conquerors. Said Napoleon I., when banished to St Helena, "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded great empires: but upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon Love, and to this very day millions would die for Him."

Love will be manifested among the sons as it has ever been manifested by the Father, by persistently *overcoming evil with good*. Love is the fire by which both God and man melt down enmity, and transform enemies into friends. On one occasion the missionary Lacroix was preaching in a chapel in Calcutta, when a Hindu came behind him, and, with a heavy stick, struck a blow at his head. The congregation immediately arose and shouted for the police. The missionary calmly said, "Let us have no police," and taking the man, and gently placing him before him, he taught them the Christian doctrine of forgiveness. The effect on the congregation was such that they shouted aloud, "Victory, Victory to Jesus Christ!"

Love will manifest itself *in prayer for others*. Mr Murray says: "There is nothing that should make Christians so ashamed as their non-appreciation of the influence of intercession for others. How many

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Christians who have thought everything was right with them; who spend their little time in prayer daily, their quarter hour or half hour, and get benefit from it; who have never made it a rule to make time for prayer for others. Love gives its time and its ardent heart's desire, and says, 'Father, oh for a blessing on those around me!'"

Love will manifest itself *in service for others*. What a pandemonium this fallen world would be if it were not for the natural love which clings to the wreck of humanity! It is Love that builds hospitals, orphanages, asylums, refuges, churches, mission-halls, light-houses, and lifeboats. It is Love that frees the slave, that ministers to the diseased, that visits the afflicted, that clothes the naked, that feeds the hungry, that cares for the crippled, that soothes the dying. If the Love that is so largely natural and human were to give place to a Love that is supernatural and Divine, what a transformation would be effected! The wilderness and the solitary place would indeed be glad thereof, and the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Love will manifest itself *in sacrifice for others*: "Hereby know we Love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the Love of God abide in him?" (1 John iii. 16, 17). We are in danger of indulging in lofty views which lie out of the way of common experience. If we dream of heroic self-sacrifice, of a real laying down of life if the occasion demanded, and

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neglect opportunities of self-sacrifice which are not heroic, such as giving to a brother in need, we shall offer no proof to the world of the indwelling of the Divine Love. The word here is "*beholdeth*," and not merely "*seeth*" as by a hasty glance. It means there is a full knowledge of the brother's need. We may live a long life without being called upon to use our principles of self-sacrifice on a *grand* scale ; but it is not only by small, every-day acts of Love that we manifest the Love of God to the world, as it is in this way we chiefly add to the real happiness of others.

"It is well," said John Wesley, "that you should be thoroughly sensible of this : the Heaven of Heavens is Love, there is nothing higher in religion, there is in effect nothing else. If you look for anything but more Love, you are looking wide of the mark : you are getting out of the royal way."

" ' Beloved, let us love one another,' says St John,  
Eagle of Eagles calling from above :  
Words of strong nourishment for life to feed upon,  
' Beloved, let us love.'

"Voice of an eagle, yea, Voice of the Dove :  
If we may love, *winter* is past and gone ;  
Publish we, praise we, for lo ! it is enough.  
' Beloved, let us love.'

"More sunny than sunshine that ever yet shone,  
Sweetener of the bitter, smoother of the rough,  
*Highest lesson of all lessons* for all to con,  
' Beloved, let us love.'"

“THIS England of ours should be naturally and properly a land of almost eternal winter. For some eight months of the year our very seas ought to be frozen over so that no ship could approach our shores. Our islands should be a rough, rude tract of country, where only the hardiest forms of life could survive—a land of forest where wild beasts should roam, whose furs should give to the place almost its only value, and where the deep snows should make agriculture almost impossible. This should be Great Britain—a proud name for so desolate a tract.

“What mystery is this which delivers us? Away in the distant Southern world, in the fierce heat of the Tropics, starts the Gulf Stream. It gathers the warmth of the sun, and sends it for thousands of miles across the seas to lave our shores. And thus the Arctic winter is driven from us; and our ports are open all the year round. Over us stretch the kindlier skies; about us blow the gentler winds; our fields are covered with grass, the valleys are thick with corn; the pastures are covered with flocks and herds; and this favoured land is shut off from extremes, and has the summer of the North with the winter of the South.

“Now think of some shivering native of Labrador who has heard of this Gulf Stream, and scornfully shakes his head. ‘I do not believe it,’ says he; ‘it is impossible and absurd.’ Well, I would not argue the subject. I would only invite him to come and see.

“‘But where is this Gulf Stream which does such wonders? Can you see it?’ No, we cannot see it, *but it is there*—hidden, noiseless, mingling with our waters and transforming our climate.

“The parable is a many-sided illustration of the truth. Of nature, of ourselves, we do dwell in a land of winter—frozen and well-nigh dead, without the energy to put forth any life of God. But lo, about us there flow gracious influences from another world. We know not how, but by the Holy Spirit of God there is breathed about us and within us the Love of God, softening, transforming; bringing to us a new heaven and a new earth.”—MARK GUY PEARSE.

## CHAPTER VI

### *"EVERYTHING SHALL LIVE"*

#### A Life of Abundant Usefulness

A N artist once painted a picture in order to illustrate the intense interest with which the rising of the Nile is regarded in Egypt. "The plain is scorched and arid, and the river, prisoned between its banks, halts for very weariness, and seems scarcely to have strength enough to propel its sluggish stream. On an eminence, by a group of palms, stands a knot of Egyptian peasants talking wildly to each other, and with eyes all strained in the direction of the south, in which quarter there seems to gather an indescribable haze, the forecasting shadow of some atmospheric or other change. Why is their gaze so wistfully fastened just where the river faintly glimmers on the horizon's dusky verge? They know from the experience of years that the time has come for the inundation of the Nile!" They may not know by what secret processes the waters are gathered; that famine or plenty depends upon the rainfall in Abyssinia and Equatorial Africa, but they calculate upon the coming of the flood as certainly as if their knowledge was profound and scientific.

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In the month of May and the beginning of June the Egyptian Nile is little better than "a great sluggish ditch." About April the torpid stream begins to swell, but the flood is not felt in Lower Egypt until near the end of June. Then the waters take on a green colour from the mass of stagnant vegetation. By and by, as the water begins to rise, it becomes reddish-brown, turbid, opaque, and laden with sediment.

The melting snows in Abyssinia, and the heavy inter-tropical rains there, pour a prodigious volume of water into the Blue, and later into the White Nile, driving before it the accumulations of dead and living organic matter that have sweltered in the stagnant pools of the Soudan during the preceding months.

The all-engrossing question is whether the "Nile" is to be a scanty, a sufficient, or a superabundant one. Day by day the officials in Cairo are busy noting every inch of the rise, which is recorded on the square, graduated pillar, that for more than a thousand years has been used as a Nilometer. The criers hurry through the city, proclaiming in pompous tones, and with abundance of Oriental imagery, the state of the river. There are several criers appointed to perform this office, one for each district of the town.

On the 3rd of July "The Crier of the Nile" begins his work. He has announced on the previous day that "Allah has been propitious to the land! To-morrow is the day of good news!" After a wordy preface he makes the important announcement, "Five and a half digits to-day, and the Lord is bountiful." Everyone is interested in the news. Rich men will arrange for



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the criers to halt in front of their doors for the dole of a hunk of bread, or for a small piece of money. What energy the inhabitants can spare is devoted to “the river,” for the importance of the annual overflow can scarcely be overrated. When the long-expected and welcome flood comes, the scorched plain waves with ripening grain, and the blackened pastures are gay with such a fertile plenty that the whole land eats and is satisfied, for “everything shall live whither the river cometh.”

Without that life-giving river the fertile Delta would be a desert. The entire wealth of the Nile Valley depends on the soil; and in a region which for all practical purposes is rainless, irrigation is the only means whereby it can be made to yield its nutritive material to the crops; and no other means of obtaining water exists except what the annual rise affords. So marvellous is the transformation, that the Turkish description of the Egyptian climate stands good—that “for three months the land is white as pearl, for three months black like musk, for three months green like emerald, for three months yellow like gold.”

What a graphic illustration this affords of the vision of Ezekiel in chapter xlvii. of his prophecy! How those barren and blistered plains, on which the consuming heat has lighted, destroying everything that is green, and inducing the dread of famine, picture the moral barrenness of the world. What can better illustrate the life and healing, the blessing and fruitfulness, the laughing joy and gladness which attends God’s great gift of His Spirit, than the flood

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of welcome water which turns drought into abundance, and causes everything to live. What can more powerfully image our attitude towards the reception of the Pentecost than the intense eagerness with which the Cairenes regard the state of the river, upon whose rise depends the fertility and prosperity of their land. Oh, to have a heart that pulsates with gladness, and sings aloud for very joy when the tidings reach us of the rise and overflow, in any part of this redeemed world, of the River of God that brings Life to dead souls.

Let us first carefully read this vision, so rich in Oriental imagery and colouring, and then notice—

### *I. The Source of the River.*

“He brought me back to the door of the House; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the House eastward: for the fore-front of the House was towards the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the House, on the south of the altar” (Ezek. xlvii. 1, 2). In consequence of the sin of the people and the defilement of the sacred building, the prophet had seen the Holy Presence depart from the Temple by the way of the east, towards the Mount of Olives. The purification of the Temple was the occasion for the return of the lost favour and glory. The relations, suspended because of sin, are restored when man’s nature is cleansed, and the courts of the Temple are once more filled with the mystic lustre of Jehovah’s Presence. “And the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the

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Lord filled the house. And I heard one speaking unto me out of the house ; and a man stood by me. And He said unto me, Son of man, this is the place of My Throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever” (chap. xliii. 5-7). The prophet is assured that the Eternal Spirit has now taken up a perpetual abode within His consecrated Temple, and that those courts shall henceforth be pure from every defilement. In the vision of the waters we have depicted, in glowing colours, the blessed results flowing from Him, who now, in His fulness, dwells in the midst of His people.

The River has its Source in God Himself ; in His Fatherly yearning ; in His boundless pity ; in His redeeming purpose. It springs from the heart of Infinite Love, and comes to this dreary, despoiled, desert land bringing life, cleansing, fruitfulness, food, and medicine. So marvellous are its effects upon individuals and communities, that men are bound to admit that none but a Divine mind could have conceived it ; none but a Divine heart could have produced it ; none but a Divine power could have applied it.

There is a familiar, but none the less remarkable paraphrase of this vision of the waters in the Gospel of John, where, applying to Himself the figure of the water that was being poured out in connection with the solemnities of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus said : “ If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living

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water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 37-39). Here is the River taking its rise at the Throne of the Glorified Son of Man, and finding for its channels men and women who have learnt the secret of absolute surrender to God, in order that out of them might flow rivers of blessing to others.

The River in Ezekiel's vision flows from a *Sanctuary*. There are three things to be remembered about a Sanctuary. *First*, it must be separated from sinful and common uses; *secondly*, it must be dedicated to God, and belong exclusively to Him; *thirdly*, it must be occupied by God, and be filled by Him as its Possessor, its Guest, and the Object of its worship. In this sense the truly separated and surrendered believer is God's Sanctuary, and out of the fulness which God's abiding Presence brings, rivers of blessing will always flow.

The mention of the *altar* in Ezekiel's vision recalls the words of John in the Apocalypse: "He shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God *and of the Lamb*" (Rev. xxii. 1, 2). In other words, it is from God through *sacrifice*. An ancient fable tells of the outgushing of a perennial fountain on the spot where a great hero fell and died; but that is only a kind of poetic parable of the true, for when Jesus died there sprang from beneath the altar on which He suffered a River whose streams are yet to make glad all the nations of the earth. The Throne of God has become,

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by the sacrifice of Jesus once for all, the Throne of Grace and the Throne of Power.

From under *the altar of sacrifice* God causes to flow forth streams of life. From the south side of the eternal altar the living waters flow, sweeping away, as in the case of the Nile, all obstacles and impurities, deepening in depth and power of life until the Dead Sea, the sea of judgment, is converted into life.

The indissoluble connection between sacrifice and the pouring out of the Spirit is very striking. It follows, in the very nature of the Divine Order of things, that there can be no pouring out of the Spirit, as an overwhelming flood of life and power for the world, without sacrifice on the part of Christ. He must give *Himself* in order to do it. It is, in short, the giving of *Himself* when it is said: “Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear” (Acts ii. 33).

The gift of Divine Love is revealed to us as two-fold. It includes the bearing away of the sin of the world, and the immersion of the whole being of man in the fulness of the Divine life. The sacrificial life-blood of the Lamb of God, and the Holy Spirit and Fire of God, flowing through the Son from the Father, are the complete and inalienable heritage of man and the gift of Eternal Love.

This vital union between sacrifice and the out-pouring of the Spirit touches very deeply the life and experience of many a Christian. Why, instead

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of abundant rivers of blessing, is there in so many cases only a tiny rill; constant and painful effort, instead of delightful spontaneity; is it not because there has been no giving up of self unto the death? There *must* be this—it is a question of Divine procedure—before there can be the unhindered inflow of the power and life of God. We give all to receive all, and we receive all that we may continually give all.

There could be no Pentecost until Jesus was glorified—that is, till after His full sacrifice on the Cross, and His ascension into glorified union with the Father. “It behoved Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory.” He was then in the spiritual region of power to pour forth abundantly the fulness of the Spirit of His glorified life. Real identification with Christ in His death and in His risen life will be most certainly followed by the flowing forth of water of life, for all the streams flow from Him who is our central Life, and we are truly one with Him. “We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. vi. 4, 5).

When God comes to discover to us all false life, that in union with Jesus we may claim deliverance from its subtle and poisonous power, we are tempted to interfere with the radical work which He will most certainly accomplish if we but *will* that it should be so. If we are to be raised from one degree of life to



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another, until we are fully baptized into a perfect unity of spirit with Him, it can only be by the sacrifice of all that belongs to the old nature, which is irreconcilably and eternally antagonistic to God, and from which, owing to imperfect light and imperfect faith, we are only, perchance, in part delivered. Many prefer that the wound of their corruption should be healed but slightly; and because they shrink from the fire of judgment which will condemn and shrivel up the old life of sin, with all its self-originating activities, they are never fully brought into the region of life and power.

John suggested that the day of the Lord's first Advent was to be a day of judgment and burning. It was connected with the hewing down and burning of fruitless trees, the winnowing of wheat and the destruction of chaff. The mere letter, the external husk, the chaff of all things and men, even of the elect nation, must be separated from what was precious by the Spirit who was a fan, and then consumed by the fire in which all the things that can be shaken are consumed.

The word Spirit (*pneuma*) means breath, and also blast. The Holy Breath of God both destroys and energises. Being baptized in the Holy Ghost is nothing less than being immersed into that stream of the living Breath which came upon the young prophet of Nazareth, anointing Him as the Lord Christ, the anointed hero of God, who in the power of the Spirit would triumph over all opposition, preach the Gospel to the poor, heal the sick, deliver the oppressed, and finally conquer Satan and all the legions of hell.



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It is not a mere physical force, however complex in nature or magnificent in dynamic power—it is now nothing less than Christ breathing forth HIMSELF into man, in indissoluble life, in mighty action and energy, and in infinite Love. Before we can be a Sanctuary of God, from which the river of blessing flows in ever-growing volume and power, we must know what it is, not theologically or theoretically, but experimentally and practically, to be baptized into Christ's death. They who share in His utter surrender of will to the death, even the death of the Cross, in dying to sin and in loving sacrifice for others, share also in the fulness of His resurrection life and power. "This thing is true in Him and in us." There is no easy and self-indulgent way for the servant, while the Master trod the path of sacrifice and lived the laid-down life. There is but one principle for all mankind, and sooner or later all must be brought into the region of death to self and sin, and of the sacrifice of their whole being to God, if they are ever to be brought into the region of life and power. The same Spirit kills and quickens, slays and makes alive. Jesus constantly taught that it was only by the surrender of what men called life that room could be found for what He called life. The Life of God first kills lower life, then makes alive with higher life, because weak, sinful life must give place, through death, to higher, stronger life.

"Thy killing and Thy quickening power,  
Jesus, in me display;  
The life of nature from this hour  
My pride and passion, slay."

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The pouring forth of the Spirit from the Sanctuary is the one event which completes the sacrifice of Christ. The Crucifixion was the sacrifice offered in the earthly body and life of the Son of Man. The Baptism of the Spirit is the pouring out of the Heavenly Life-power of the Christ, who, as the glorified Son of Man, has received from the Father the promise of the Spirit, and is invested by Him, as the reward for His sacrifice, with universal dominion (see Eph. i. 20-23). The gift of God is completed in Christ, who first shed His life-blood on earth as the Lamb of God, and who then ascends to the fullest glorified union with the Father at the right hand of power, "far above all Heavens, that He might fill all things." And this filling of all things He accomplishes by pouring forth continually His glorified Life-Spirit, which Paul calls "The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus." \*

### II. *The Increase of the River.*

The river began in a few trickling drops oozing from under the threshold of the House. But it rapidly increases in volume until the drops become a rivulet, the rivulet a stream, the stream a river, the river a sea so deep and wide that it could not be passed over. "When the man went forth eastward with the line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the knees.

\* I am conscious of much indebtedness to a book I once read by Rev. S. Borton Brown. I believe it was called "The Fire Baptism."

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Again he measured a thousand, and caused me to pass through the waters, waters that were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass through: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this?" (vers. 3-6).

Here is the great law of progress. The Man with the measuring line is among us, for, as Plato said, "God is always measuring the world." What does His spiritual Nilometer register so far as we are concerned? What progress has this Life-giving River made in our experience? Many of us are yet, where we have been for years, in the first stage of the river's course. About half a mile from its source the waters were to the ankles. Ours is, perhaps, only an ankle-deep experience. The thought in the Hebrew is that of a very little water, perhaps not more than enough to cover the soles of the feet; but while we do not despise "the day of small things," let us beware of being satisfied with them. "No one can stand still," says the author of "Memoranda Sacra," "who lives with God. If God is the fountain of your life, there will be no green mantle on the surface telling how long you have been in one place. Neither in earth or in heaven do we stand still or stay where we are. Take up the anchor and the ship follows the tide, and in God the tide always sets one way. You cannot stand still without anchoring to the creature. Abandonment to God must mean advancement in God—

'They who truly love God cannot love Him by measure,  
For their love is a hunger to love Him still better.'

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The expression, “waters that were to the knees,” points to the increasing possession of the Spirit by the believer. If anyone, reading these words, is exposed to continual self-condemnation because of feebleness in the life of intercession, let him learn from this vision that the secret of prevalence with God is, first, in being delivered by the power of the Spirit from all that makes prayer feeble, and that leads to such frequent fainting in its exercise; and, secondly, in absolute abandonment to God’s Spirit to be a shrine in which He makes “intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The water that comes from the Throne must find its own level, and in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving it returns to the source from whence it came.

A thousand cubits more and “the waters were to the loins.” The girding of the loins is the symbol of service and strength, and if Jesus did not begin His ministry until He was girded by the Spirit, what presumption it is for us to do so. In what strength is our service rendered? If we are living in the region of death, our works will be dead; but if we have found our way *through* the region of death into the region of life and power, our activities will throb with the life of God, and we shall prove that no word of God’s is void of power.

The waters have now risen and become “waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.” All the prophet can do is to lie upon the bosom of the current and “follow the tide.” He who thus comes to an end of his own effort has nought to do but to fall into the ocean of God’s Life, and hence-

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forth live, move, and have his being in Him. To declare ourselves to be bankrupt, so far as human resources are concerned, is the only way to inherit the Omnipotence of God. It is when I am weak that I am strong; and it is they who wait upon the Lord who exchange their strength (Isa. xl. 31, marg.).

“It is your privilege to be immersed in Life, saturated with Life, till all your being is Life in the fullest and deepest sense. You must be immersed in Christ, who is the Life. He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire. He shall immerse you, and saturate you in the Holy Ghost, the Divine energy and Life of God, until all your being is in utter unity with God, and with the glorified Life of Humanity as revealed in Christ. And God by Christ will take His own way and time to bring it about.”

There is no finality in the Christian life. It is “a river that cannot be passed through.” Under the law of spiritual development the heavenly virtues expand for ever. There is no height of purity beyond which a redeemed spirit may not attain a higher ascension. Heaven itself will be an eternal approach to God.

“O past and gone !  
How great is God ! how small am I !  
A mote in the illimitable sky,  
Amidst the glory deep, and wide, and high  
Of Heaven’s unclouded sun.  
There to forget myself for evermore ;  
Lost, swallowed up in Love’s immensity,  
The sea that knows no sounding and no shore,  
God only there, not I.”

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### III. *The Beneficence of the River.*

The wealth of imagery in verses 6-12 is almost bewildering, but it is summed up in the words: “Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh” (ver. 9). Perhaps the most striking figure in these verses is that which describes the healing of the waters of the Dead Sea (vers. 8-10). That Dead Sea is the most pathetic emblem of man’s moral barrenness in the pages of inspiration. The Jordan, with its streams, flows into it, but nothing ever flows out. The sweet water has been flowing into it for ages, but it has not healed its bitterness. Its shores are barren, for nothing of value ever grows upon its banks. The fish which come down the Jordan quickly die as they approach it, for in its dense and unnatural water nothing of value can ever live. Its taste is nauseous and pungent; it is the scene of silence, desolation, and, as its name signifies, of death. It is a picture of human nature without God, and consequently without spiritual life. Sin has destroyed all life in it, and threatens to destroy all life that approaches it. But “Lo! a River, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.” It touches this Sea of Death, and everything begins to live. It brings Life to the *understanding*, that it may no longer be smitten by error. It flows into the chamber of *imagery*, polluted by the foul things which have long held empire o’er the soul, and lo! the chamber is purified, and becomes a Gallery of Delight, wherein are to be seen whatsoever things are pure and lovely



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and of good report. It cleanses the *memory*, that it may no longer be haunted by the ghosts of foul, forsaken, and forgiven sins. It purifies the *affections*, and brings them under such control that they revel in a pure attachment, and love God supremely. It rectifies the *will*, the backbone of man's being, so often strong when it ought to be weak, and weak when it ought to be strong; and instead of being in antagonism to God, the renewed will cries Hallelujah! to every revealing of the will Divine. The whole *nature*, once dead in trespasses and sins, having received of the Divine fulness, is now instinct with Life.

Instead of bearing the vines of Sodom and the grapes of gall (Deut. xxxii. 32), the banks of the river abound in fruitful trees. "On this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for meat, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the Sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing" (ver. 12). Not yearly but monthly is the harvest renewed; so rapid is each fresh supply, that one could almost see them grow; and so plentiful is the store, that none can speak of want. The fruits are perennial and of infinite variety; so refreshing and nourishing are they, that they constitute the food of the saints.

What a picture of fruitful service is that presented in verses 9, 10, of the fishermen standing on the shores of the Dead Sea, and finding great shoals of fish, because of "the waters that are come thither."

The vision throbs with life from beginning to end,



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and teaches us that the only remedy for dead souls, dead gifts, dead graces, dead affections, dead prayers, and dead services, is to turn our eyes away from ourselves and from each other, and to throw open the gates of our entire nature, to that River of God which is always full of water, and which comes beating against our shores with music in its ripples, with sunshine in its flash, and with refreshment in its waters, then

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SOEVER THE RIVER COMETH.”

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hast come among men, whose whole nature is but a Sea of Death, that Thou mightest bring them Life; beat down every barrier that sin has erected in my nature against Thee, until there is nothing to impede Thy incoming, in all the glorious fulness of Thy Risen Life. Thou hatest death everywhere. Thou wert always the Prince of Life, the great Life-Giver, pouring into torpid faculties and languid natures the fiery vitality that rendered men instinct with Life Divine. Unto him that hast, Thou art pleased to give ever more abundantly. Having Life, I claim, therefore, from Thee Life superabundant, that in union with Thee I, too, may become a Life-Giver. Teach me, more and more, that the only safe Life is the full Life; that my danger lies in defect of vitality, and not in its excess; and from this hour may I be kept in the Life-currents of God, and thirst for no Life that is not Life in Thee. Amen.

“WHEN our Lord reproved the Jews for having refused His message, He said, ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings!’ That is what we call intercession, that spirit of *pitying* love, that spirit of *gathering* love, and controlling care and power. With this spirit our Lord was filled. Just as Christ shows this spirit in its fulness, so every believing child has a measure of it. When you were brought to the Lord, one of your instincts was to go and spread your wings over the needs of somebody else (it may be you have got pretty large wings by this time, and you are able to pray for a good many people, and bring a good many under the sense of God’s presence and power); and by the fact that you were made an interceding being, a praying being, you proved your unity with God in Christ more than by any other confession. *Our conversion to God made us members of an interceding Christ.* We not only confess that ‘*Christ liveth in me,*’ but are also aware that ‘*Christ prayeth in me.*’”

—J. RENDEL HARRIS.

“LORD, what a change within us one short hour  
 Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make ;  
 What heavy burdens from our presence take ;  
 What parched ground refresh, as with a shower ;  
 We kneel—and all about us seems to lower ;  
 We rise—and all the distant and the near  
 Stand forth in sunny outline, brave and clear ;  
 We kneel—how weak ! we rise—how full of power !  
 Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
 Or others—that we are not always strong ?  
 That we are ever overborne with care ?  
 That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
 Anxious or troubled, while with us is prayer,  
 And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee ?”

—TRENCH.

## CHAPTER VII

### *"GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF INCENSE"*

#### A Life of Intercession

“**A**ND I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And He came, and He taketh it out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Rev. v. 6-8). Here we have the praises—represented by the harps—and the prayers—represented by the golden vials full of incense—of the world-wide and age-long Church of Christ.

In a later vision John speaks of an angel who came “and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he might give it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the

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smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel taketh the censer ; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth : and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (viii. 3-5). Here the angel acts as a ministering spirit, just as the twenty-four elders in the previous vision. The angel does not provide the incense ; it was given to him by Christ, the High Priest, whose meritorious obedience and death are the incense rendering the prayers of the saints well-pleasing to God. The incense given to the prayers (*dosē proseuchais*) render them a sweet-smelling savour to God. They are described as the prayers of *all* the saints ; the saints both of the Church militant on earth and triumphant in heaven. The martyrs' cry (chap. vi. 10) is the foremost among these. The hot coals off the altar cast upon the earth (ver. 5) symbolise God's fiery judgments about to descend on the foes of the Church in answer to the incense-perfumed prayers of all the saints, which had ascended before God. It does not follow that the judgments are specifically prayed for by the Church of Christ, but they are the result of their prayers, and prove how invincible a weapon prayer is, despite its oft-confessed weakness and imperfection.

This comparison of prayer with incense is not only in strict accordance with Old Testament language, but is, as we shall see, exceedingly suggestive. The literal rendering of Psalm cxli. 2 is, "Let my prayer appear before Thee incense, the lifting up of my hands an evening sacrifice," implying that prayer was

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in the reality what incense was in the symbol. While Zacharias was offering incense within the Sanctuary, the people without were engaged in prayer, thus joining in spirit with the priestly service.

This will naturally lead us to an examination of that portion of the Mosaic ritual dealing with the Altar of Incense, and, without indulging in any fanciful spiritualising, we may draw large lessons concerning the ministry of Intercession, for a more beautiful, significant, and instructive symbol of prayer cannot be found in the word of God. Let us notice then

### *I. The Position of the Altar of Incense.*

The Tabernacle was divided into the Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. In the Court stood the Altar of Burnt-offering. Here the sacrifices, in all their varieties, were offered by penitent or thankful worshippers. It was placed exactly opposite the entrance in the Court and the entrance to the Tabernacle. Here also was the Laver, standing between the Brazen Altar and the entrance to the Tabernacle. It was used solely by the priests. Before entering the Tabernacle to fulfil any of their priestly functions, they were obliged, under pain of death, to wash their hands and feet.

The Levites, though permitted to serve in the Court, were excluded from the Tabernacle. Only the priests could enter there, and they had access only to the outer compartment. Bare-footed, clothed in garments of white linen, they accomplished their ministrations. On the north side of the Holy Place was the table of shewbread; on the south side was

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the golden candlestick ; while between these was the Golden Altar, or Altar of Incense. It was placed at the opposite end from the entrance, and near to the magnificent curtain known as the Vail, which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. It was sometimes called "*the Altar before the Lord,*" to distinguish it from the Brazen Altar, which was "*before the door of the Tabernacle.*"

The position of the Altar of Incense was therefore directly in front of the Mercy-seat, and very near to the Divine presence. No one could reach the Altar of Incense who had not passed the Altar of Sacrifice. The question of sin must be dealt with and settled there before the offerer could pass vicariously, in the person of his representative, to make supplication at the Golden Altar.

It is difficult to conceive of a greater contrast than that afforded by the surroundings of these two altars. The Brazen Altar, in the Court, was the symbol of God's hatred of sin. It was the only altar in all the world upon which, with the Divine approval, sacrifices that were expiatory of guilt could be stately offered. At its base flowed the blood of every victim that was slain. There lay also the sacrificial knife, ready to bathe itself in the blood of the victim. The fires that leaped upon the altar, and the black smoke that rolled up in vast volumes to heaven, told the thoughtful worshipper that sin was the abominable thing that God hated. The Court was filled with the groans of dying victims, and the piteous lowing of those appointed to death, while the air was redolent with the fumes of consuming flesh.

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Pass now with the high priest through the gates of olive-wood into the Holy Place, at the opposite end of which stands the Altar of Incense. What a change! Only the faintest echoes of the distracting noises of the Court can penetrate through the cedar walls. Here there is a holy calm, only broken by the musical notes of the bells upon the vesture of the high priest. Here are no streams of blood; on the bosom of that altar of pure burnished gold lies no slowly-consuming flesh. In its stead, fragrant incense noiselessly melts away upon the glowing embers. Instead of dense volumes of black smoke, white clouds of fragrance rise from the altar, and float gently upward. The delightful aroma of the costly incense pervades the place. It is the sanctuary of forgiven hearts. The flame upon the altar is the flame of love, and love's costliest offerings—praise and prayer, supplication and intercession—are symbolised by the curling wreaths of vapour, so heavenly in their purity, continually ascending to Jehovah.

Is there anything that answers to all this in the ministry of Intercession? Are our time and strength taken up, when we come to God, in dealing with questions of sin? Many, alas, rarely get beyond the Brazen Altar. Their life is so weak and intermittent that they know scarcely anything of a repentance that needs not to be repented of. Instead, therefore, of entering into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, and finding on the throne of grace the King of Love, with outstretched sceptre, emboldening them to draw near and fill their mouth with arguments, multitudes never



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know anything of such an experience, though they often sing of

“The pure delight of a single hour  
Which before Thy throne I spend ;  
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee my God,  
I commune as friend with friend.”

As the sweet incense from the Golden Altar penetrated through the Vail and filled the Holy of Holies, so the spirit of real prayer makes both earth and heaven one; and as that Altar of Incense stood at the very entrance of the Holiest of all, so we, when talking with God face to face, are almost within the Vail, and are constrained to exclaim, in holy rapture: “This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.” “God’s ear,” said one of the Puritans, “is ever close to my lips; I have only to whisper, and He will hear.”

### II. *The Materials of the Altar of Incense.*

The altar was of acacia wood and of gold (Exod. xxx. 1-3). The acacia wood is the symbol of soundness, strength, and incorruptibility. Prayer that is prayer indeed, must proceed out of a true heart, a heart that is sound, honest, sincere, strong. “Having boldness to enter into the Holy Place, . . . let us draw near with a *true* heart.” “A true heart,” says Delitzsch, “is a heart that is entirely that which it ought to be—a heart without hypocrisy and without double-mindedness.” That is a bold prayer of David’s, “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Ps. xxvi. 2). He submits both his emotional and his intellectual nature to the severest

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testing, for the image he uses is taken from the testing and purifying of gold in the furnace, for it is to this the word “try” properly applies. It is as if the gold begged to be cast into the furnace. Who can say, if he offers this prayer, how hot the furnace may need to be? “Truth” is of God, “integrity” (see Ps. xxv. 21 ; xxvi. 1) belongs to us. We can only have “truth” as we receive it from God, and we can only have “integrity” as we allow God’s truth to rule our hearts and our lives. First the heart is made right by being directed into the love of God, then the life is made holy by being swayed by the will of God. This leads to spiritual soundness and incorruptibility, and, apart from this, we do but play at praying.

The gold with which the altar was to be overlaid was to be “pure gold” (Exod. xxx. 3). Gold being the purest and most precious of metals, is, of course, a type of that which is divinely excellent and glorious. *Pure* gold is gold that is refined until every atom of native dross and alloy is purged away. Everything in that Holy Place must be pure. The olive oil for the golden candlestick must be “pure olive oil” (Lev. xxiv. 2); the candlestick must be a *pure* candlestick (xxiv. 4); the frankincense for the altar must be *pure* frankincense (Exod. xxx. 34); the incense in its entirety must be “*pure* incense” (xxxvii. 29); the shewbread must be placed on a “*pure* table” (Lev. xxiv. 6).

How this insistence upon purity speaks to us of the absolute necessity of prayer that goes not forth out of feigned lips. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Ps. lxvi. 18).

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“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save ; neither is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you” (Isa. lix. 1, 2).

The heart of God broods over us with unutterable Love. Not one of us knows how alert the Divine ear is to the human cry, or sigh, or whisper ; nay, to every thought and wish and desire. Just as the blue star gentians lie so close to the ground on the Swiss mountains that you can scarcely see them, yet do not escape the all-searching, all-beautifying power of the sunlight, so the ear of God finds out the feeblest flutter of the soul’s love, anything that tells of the heart’s longing and loneliness. “A sigh can reach His ear ; a look can bring Him down.” His ear is never heavy, that it cannot hear. If we say, like Job, “I cry unto Thee, and Thou dost not answer me : I stand up, and Thou lookest not at me” (Job xxx. 20), it is because there is some fault in man’s cry and not in God’s ear.

There must be an explanation of the distaste, the want of relish for prayer of which so many complain ; of the deadness, reluctance, and unfaithfulness which make prayer a burden and not a life, an irksome duty and not a delightful privilege. What is the explanation ? *It is an unhealthy spiritual life.* We have not fully grasped the truth that the altar, the incense, the oil, the candlestick, *must* be pure.

When the Bishop of Osma wrote to Santa Teresa, asking her to exercise the ministry of Intercession on his behalf, she replied : “I promise myself, from your

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goodness, that you will take in good part what I feel compelled to say to you. Recognising the great favours our Lord has done you in having bestowed upon you humility, charity, zeal for souls, and a strong desire to vindicate the Divine honour, I still besought the Lord for an increase in you of all these same virtues and perfections, in order that you may prove as accomplished in all these things as the dignity of your office requires,—*till it was discovered to me that you still wanted that which is the foundation of every virtue, and without which the whole superstructure dissolves, and falls in ruins. You want prayer. You want believing, persevering, courageous prayer.* And the want of prayer causes all that drought and disunion from which you say your soul suffers."

Then she recommends the bishop to say to God: "I come, O Lord, bishop as I am, to Thy children's school of prayer and obedience. I come to Thee, not to teach, but to learn. I will speak to Thee, who am but dust and ashes." She closes by remarking that "to be a master in the science of heaven cannot be done without a long time at school and much hard work."

If Santa Teresa were living to-day, and some of us who teach and preach, who have the feeding and oversight of the flock of God, were to write to her, as the Bishop of Osma did, for spiritual counsel, we doubt not her reply to many of us would be, "You want prayer. You want believing, persevering, courageous prayer."

Probably the suggestion would annoy us. It

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sounds so personal, and it savours, some would say, of impertinence. *But is it true?* What do our people say? They know the odour which the box of spikenard yields in public when it has been filled in secret. They know us as affable, and sympathetic, and enterprising; they know our powers of conversation. But do they know our power in prayer? What do our children say? They know more about us than the outside world; they are behind the scenes. Do they ever break in upon us when we are engaged in agonising, "persevering, courageous prayer"? What will that record say which we ourselves have written, when over against our hours of sleep, of work, of reading, and of recreation, is put our hours of secret prayer?

John Owen, that prince of Puritans, says: "A minister may fill his pews, his passages, his communion-roll, the mouths of the public; but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is, and no more."

Does the superstructure of our life give evidence of incompleteness and instability? Do we sometimes feel as if we were sailing under false colours, because of the unsatisfactoriness of our religious experience? Does our work occasion us endless anxiety, and sometimes threaten to fall into ruins? *We want prayer*, and nothing but prayer will give stability either to our character or service.

In one of his latest books—"The Ministry of Intercession"—Andrew Murray remarks that feebleness and failure in prayer is a sign of feebleness in the spiritual life, the prayer-life being simply the

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pulse of the spiritual system. Resolutions to conquer reluctance to pray, and to take more time for prayer, are of little value, as the experience of multitudes will prove. What is needed is the discovery that this failure is only a symptom of disease, and that there must be a radical change in the whole life and walk if the prayer-life, the spiritual pulse, is to indicate health and vigour.

This disease arises from no other cause than failure to accept that complete cleansing of the defiled nature which God has provided in the sacrifice of His Son, and the priestly anointing of which we have previously spoken, which is the crowning blessing of this Pentecostal era. Multitudes are entangled with the yoke of bondage, and are seeking by struggle and self-effort to accomplish that which is no more of works than is justification, and which, because it is of faith, may, thank God, be NOW. The first step, therefore, in the removal of this awful deadness to prayer is the instantaneous appropriation by naked faith of God's full salvation. Where sin abounded, grace will then much more abound; and the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, having emancipated the soul from the law of sin and death, will make that a delight and a triumph which has been hitherto a drudgery and a failure.

### III. *The Incense of the Altar.*

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight. And thou shalt make of it incense, a perfume after the art of the perfumer,



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seasoned with salt, pure and holy. And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put it before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And the incense which thou shalt make, according to the composition thereof, ye shall not make for yourselves: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, he shall be cut off from the people" (Exod. xxx. 34-38).

This mixture, the ingredients of which are described with such precision, was to be pounded into very small particles, and deposited before the ark of the testimony, that there might be a store of it always in readiness. So precious and holy was this incense considered, that it was forbidden, on pain of death, to make a similar perfume for private use. How this infinite care, that the incense should be properly composed of the right material and in the right proportion, speaks to us of the danger of adventuring rashly, carelessly, unpreparedly, upon the exercise of the priceless and "most holy" ministry of Intercession.

The expression "*most holy*" is used in Exodus xxx. first of the altar (ver. 10) and afterwards of the incense of the altar (ver. 36). Such an expression must have led a devout spirit as David's, for instance, to regard prayer as *the holiest act of the spiritual life*. The love of the human heart, its adoration, its gratitude, its aspirations, and not least, its brokenness and contrition, ascend to God in this supreme act of the regenerated and purified nature.

But the words "*most holy*" suggest to most of us what prayer may *become* rather than what it *is*, for



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there are various stages in the prayer-life. Perhaps we shall give more attention to its cultivation when we are fully persuaded that the ministry of Intercession is a holier and mightier ministry than that of preaching. Many a master of eloquence in the pulpit may be but a babe in intercession.

The gradations in the life of prayer are clearly marked in the Gospels. In Matthew vi. 8 we are taught to ask our Father, with childlike simplicity, for all ordinary necessities, for “your Father knoweth.” In Luke xi. 5-13 there is a recognition of a more intense spirit of prayer; a resolute earnestness, as if the things sought were only to be gained by aroused and concentrated effort. The “asking” has become the “knocking” which triumphs over the greatest obstacles, which sees the brazen gates of hindrance and opposition fly open, which puts its hand on the Omnipotence of God until His Name prevails against all that opposes His will. For food and raiment for the body we are taught to pray submissively; but for food and raiment for the soul (ver. 13) we are to pray with an importunity that knows no denial.

In Luke xviii. 1-8 there is another upward step. Here prayer grows incessant; its voice is heard day and night. The reference to “*the faith*” in verse 8 (R.V.) puts into our hands another of the keys which unlock the Treasury of heaven. If “*the faith*” is lacking—as the Saviour suggests it will be in the majority of cases—there will be no response. If it is in mighty exercise, it becomes audacious, impetuous, and torrent-like, sweeping away all obstacles, and obtaining speedy deliverance from the oppression of the adversary.

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There is a still further ascension in Matthew xvii. Here is prayer wielding its power in a realm where spirits dwell. By fasting we let go our hold upon the world and upon our bodily impulses, and by such prayer as this we lay hold upon God, and to those who are in the highest exercise of faith "*nothing shall be impossible*" (ver. 20).

The highest stage is reached in John xvi. 23-26. Here the children have become men, and, anticipating the Pentecost, in the oft-repeated "*whatsoever ye will*," Jesus hands over to His disciples the keys of the kingdom. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Whatsoever ye shall ask* the Father in My Name, He will give it you" (John xvi. 23).

Herein lies the necessity for an anointing into the Royal Priesthood. It is not granted to those who do not seek for it, and it is not granted to *any* except on the condition of the deliberate and eternal surrender of the spirit, soul, and body to God, to be a Shrine in which the Holy Spirit can make intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered. Such souls have entered into the Holiest of Holies, and exercise their ministry under the power of a perennial Pentecost, and in the very presence-chamber of the King, while others minister in the Outer Court, where the rest and rapture of those who are anointed to "draw near" is an unknown experience. Who of us can sing with Tersteegen—

" His priest am I, before Him day and night,  
Within His Holy Place ;  
And death, and life, and all things dark and bright,  
I spread before His Face.

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Rejoicing with His joy ; yet ever still,  
For silence is my song ;  
My work to bend beneath His blessed will,  
All day, and all night long—  
For ever holding with Him converse sweet,  
Yet speechless, for my gladness is complete.”

That sturdy old Puritan John Owen indicates a fourfold resemblance between incense and prayer—  
(a) As incense was *beaten and pounded* before it was used, so acceptable prayer proceeds from “a broken and contrite heart.” (b) Incense was of no use *until fire was put under it*, and that taken from the altar ; nor is prayer of any efficacy until kindled by the Holy Spirit, which we have from our Altar, Christ Jesus. (c) It *naturally ascended* towards heaven. All offerings in the Hebrew are called “ascensions,” even so all true prayer ascends to the throne of God. (d) It *yielded a sweet savour* ; prayer likewise yields to God “a savour of rest,” wherein He is well pleased.

The second of these points of resemblance is full of suggestiveness. It was the *glowing embers* in the golden vials which were full of incense which caused the grateful cloud to ascend, and in proportion to the heat the fragrant wreaths of incense increased. The incense only climbed to heaven when it was hot. Cold spirits mean cold prayers. In other words, our prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings must be set on fire by the Holy Spirit, who is the great Intercessor on earth, as Jesus is the great Intercessor in heaven. Just as we saw in the previous chapter sacrifice preceding service, so here we see sacrifice

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preceding prayer. Slightly changing familiar lines, we may say,—

“Our prayers fly up, our sacrifice is below,  
Prayers without sacrifice cannot to heaven go.”

“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath *aught against thee*, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. v. 23, 24). This is a much harder command to obey than that in Mark xi. 25, where we read: “And whosoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have *aught against anyone*.” But if thy brother has “*aught against thee*,” even though the blame may be entirely his; when we have made a sacrifice of our time and self-esteem, a sacrifice of our own legal rights, thus fulfilling the conditions laid down by Christ, then the sacrifice will be instantly accepted, and the fragrant incense will penetrate into the very presence of God. Shame on us for our coldness, when the Spirit that brings the heat is at the door of our temple with the fire from off the eternal Altar.

Think also of the *fragrance* of the incense. “Perfume is the breath of flowers, the sweetest expression of their inmost being, an exhalation of their very life. It is a sign of perfect purity, health, and vigour; it is a symptom of full and joyous existence; for disease, and decay, and death yield not pleasant but revolting odours. And as such, fragrance is in nature what prayer is in the human world. Prayer is the breath of life, the expression of the soul’s best, holiest, and

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heavenliest aspirations, the symptom and token of its spiritual health and right and happy relations with God. The natural counterparts of the prayers that rise from the closet and the sanctuary are to be found in the delicious breathings from gardens of flowers, from clover crofts, thymy hillsides, or dim pine-woods, and which seem to be grateful, unconscious acknowledgments from the heart of Nature for the timely blessings of the great world-covenant; the dew to refresh, and the sunshine to quicken."\*

I am not forgetting, of course, that the fragrant incense on the Golden Altar was a type of Him whose whole being was fragrant with delicious odour to the Father who could say during every moment of that wondrous life, "I am well pleased"! It spoke of His unchanging, untiring intercession for us, but it speaks also of the prayers and intercessions of the saints, conformed to His image, and made by the Holy Spirit "according to the Pattern."

The *perpetuity of the offering* upon this "Altar before the Lord," is only the Old Testament symbol of the New Testament command to "pray without ceasing." The incense was renewed upon the Altar every morning when Aaron dressed the lamps, and every evening when he lit them (Exod. xxx. 7, 8). The fire, kindled by coals from the Brazen Altar, was always burning, and the incense was continually rising. All the day and all the night it smouldered quietly upon the Altar, but every morning and night it was blown into a flame. It has been pointed out that the expression in the Psalms, "I give myself to

\* Hugh Macmillan's "Ministry of Nature," p. 33.

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prayer," is in the original "*I am* prayer," and that the words, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God," are really much stronger—"My soul *is* a waiting upon God." By all means let us have our stated times of prayer; a strong, deep, spiritual life cannot be maintained without them. We have need to forge for ourselves holy habits that will bind us as with golden chains. But we must abide in such an attitude towards God as to be able to turn into prayer whatever, for the time, is engrossing our attention. We can talk to God about our business, or, if we cannot, the sooner we get out of it the better. We can talk to Him about the book we are reading, or, if we cannot, we had better put it into the fire. The prayer of Jesus recorded in John xvii. is a model prayer in this, as in other directions, that it is a hallowed conversation with His Father about that which was uppermost in His heart. A lady entered the drawing-room of the house where she was visiting, and found her hostess, quite oblivious of her guest's entrance, talking with quiet familiarity, as she sat in her chair, to her Saviour and Lord about one of her daughters, for whom she was most anxious to find a suitable school.

Accustom yourself to pray about the train you are going to take, and for the company in which you will travel; to pray about the purchases you are going to make, and for the young people behind the counter; to pray for the people you meet in the street, and for the unseen inmates of the houses you pass; to pray for the sufferers in that orphanage or asylum, of which you have but a glimpse as the train rushes along.



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Let the cloud of fragrant incense be always ascending, and at certain set seasons let it be fanned into a thick and heavenly cloud.

Think of the incredible ease of prayer. There is no time, or place, or posture, in and by which we cannot reverently confess the Presence of God, and obtain access to Him. It is not a question of eloquent words and pleasing phrases; our *want* is more eloquent than words, our *hunger* for God is our best argument. Let the words stumble over each other, as do the words of the tiny prattler to the earthly father, what matters it? The eager, wistful face of that little child pleads better than his almost unintelligible prayer. God has put Himself continually at our disposal, and for the sake of Jesus He allows us almost unbounded influence over Him. We may be the most insignificant and unknown among the saints, but if we have given ourselves to the cultivation of the precious talent of intercession, God says: "I have set *thee* over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy, and to overthrow, to build, and to plant" (Jer. i. 10). While on earth we shall never fully know the might of prayer, for there is between a wicked man and God's threatened judgment, a space into which a good man may step and pray. But the times are against prayer; the spirit of the age is against it; the habits of life are against it. Yet the host of intercessors is rapidly increasing. Men and women are finding out that when other ministries are closed against them, no one can close against them this holiest of all ministries.



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Wise indeed are the words of one gone from among us on this great subject: "A man's praying power is not an arbitrary thing; it is the result of long antecedent processes. If a man finds himself an effective intercessor with God, a prince having power with God to prevail, it is only because he has grown to great spiritual wisdom, unselfishness, and grace. The praying power of a man is no mere accident of his mood, no mere impulse of his necessity; it is the slow growth of spiritual character; the gradual development of a faith that has grown exceedingly; the confidence which a long familiarity with God creates; the fervent sympathy and desire of a chastened unselfishness; the ripened spirituality of a carefully cultured heart. It is true that prayer is the nurturing mother of life, and that we live cold, feeble, unblest lives because we pray so little; but it is true also that life is the condition of prayer, and that we have so little disposition or power to pray because our general spiritual life is so meagre and languid. We are impotent in intercession because we have not developed praying habit into power, because we have not by daily culture, by daily communion with God, deepened and hallowed spiritual feeling until prayer has become the pervading temper, the unconscious intercourse of our daily life." \*

\* Dr Henry Allon, *The Congregationalist*, vol. i. pp. 202-204.



- “ IN the distant land of famine, craving with the swine to feed ;  
 Oh, how bitter that awakening to my sin, and shame, and need !  
 Dark and dreary all around me, now no more by sin beguiled ;  
 I would go and seek my Father, be a bondsman, not a child.
- “ Yet a great way off He saw me, ran to kiss me as I came ;  
 As I *was* my Father loved me, loved me in my sin and shame.  
 Then in bitter grief I told Him of the evil I had done—  
 Sinned in scorn of Him, my Father, was not meet to be His son.
- “ But I know not if He listened, for He spake not of my sin—  
 He within His house would have me, make me meet to enter in ;  
 From the riches of His glory brought His costliest raiment forth,  
 Brought the ring that sealed His purpose, shoes to tread His golden  
                   courts.
- “ Put them on me—robes of glory, spotless as the heavens above ;  
 Not to meet *my* thought of fitness, but *His* wondrous thoughts of love.  
 Then within His home He led me, brought me where the feast was  
                   spread,  
 Made me eat with Him, my Father, *I*, who begged for bondsman’s  
                   bread !
- “ Not a suppliant at His gateway, but a son within His home ;  
 To the love, the joy, the singing ; to the glory I am come.  
 Gathered round that wondrous temple, filled with awe His Angels see  
 Glory lighting up the Holiest ; *in that glory Him and me.*”

—HYMNS OF TERSTEEGEN, SUSO, AND OTHERS.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *ROBED ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN*

#### A Life Divinely Apparelled

**I**T will be no small advantage to us, in seeking to understand the character of the new dress that God has provided for the new life, if we gather together a few of the passages which deal with this subject. The first is of special interest, because to it Augustine attributes his entire conversion and emancipation. He says, in his "Confessions," that "when deep reflection had out of its secret fund gathered up and heaped together all my misery in the sight of my heart, a mighty storm arose; bringing a copious shower of tears, which that I might pour it all out, and weep aloud, I rose from Alypius, and casting myself down under a certain fig-tree, I gave full vent to my tears. I cried, 'And Thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord, wilt Thou be angry for ever?' I ejaculated thus sadly, 'How long?' how long?—'to-morrow and to-morrow.' Why not at once? Why not at this very hour end my foulness?"

"I spake thus, and wept in the bitterest sorrow of

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my heart. And lo, I heard a voice as of a boy or girl from a neighbouring house, I know not which, chanting and frequently repeating, 'Take, read; take, read.' And immediately, with a change of countenance, I began to think most eagerly whether boys were in the habit of using these words in any of their games, but I could not recall any such expression to my mind. So, repressing the violence of my weeping, I arose, interpreting it to be nothing less than a Divine admonition that I should open the Book and read the first chapter I should find. Returning to the spot where I had laid down the volume of the Apostle when I rose up, I seized it, opened it, and read in silence the passage on which my eyes first fell: 'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk becomingly as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof' (Rom. xiii. 12-14). I would read no further, nor was there any need for me to do so; for instantly, when I had finished the sentence, by a serene light as it were infused into my heart, all the clouds of doubt were dispersed. The works of darkness were 'cast off'; the Lord Jesus Christ was 'put on.' What I had feared to lose I now delighted to part with. For Thou didst cast them away from me, and didst enter in instead of them; Thyself, dearer than all sweetness; brighter than all light; more exalted than all honour."

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In the passage which has these interesting associations, the robing is that of the soldier panoplied for the conflict. The bugle-call announces the coming of the day, and with the darkness the night-robe must be thrown off. Clad in the armour of light, the Christian must stand, strong and vigilant, and armed against any surprise. And the armour and weapons of Light are nothing less than the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Ephesian letter there is a passage, suggestive in a remarkable degree: "But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 20-24). With this passage we will take the parallel one in the Colossian letter: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings; and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto (full) knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 9, 10).

The educational process in Christ's school, says Paul, is the apparelling of the scholars "According to the Pattern." "Hearing Him" may refer to the initial act by which we come under His instruction. "Being taught in Him" applies to the whole subsequent process of tuition. It is one thing to enrol ourselves among His scholars; it is another thing to "consider Jesus," and, by untiring, appropriating faith, to make every element of His righteousness

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and holiness our own. The initial submission to Christ must be followed by the perpetual learning of Him, or the rags of "the old man" will be discovering themselves amid the robes with which God adorns the new. This admixture is the bane of Christian life to-day, and is a distinct contravention of the significant command: "Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together" (Lev. xix. 19). Wool is an animal product; linen is a vegetable product. They come from separate kingdoms in nature, and to mix them is contrary to the law of order which prevails both in the kingdom of nature and of grace. However popular a linsey-woolsey Christianity may be, this mixedness most seriously interferes with the fruitfulness and abidingness of Christian character and service.

It will probably be helpful to gather our thoughts under three headings, viz., Renunciation, Renewal, and Appropriation.

### I. *Renunciation.*

"The old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit," must be "put away" or renounced. "The old man" is a Pauline expression, and is a bold and vivid personification of that form of character and life which we inherit from Adam, and which is the source and seat of original and actual transgression. Apart from the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, it is a form of character common to us all.

"The expression, 'our old man,'" says Godet,



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“denotes human nature such as it has been made by the sin of him in whom originally it was wholly concentrated; fallen Adam reappearing in every human *ego* that comes into the world under the sway of the preponderance of self-love, which was determined by the primitive transgression.” “By ‘the old man,’” says Dr Rainsford, “the apostle means our natural self, with all its principles and motives, its outgoings, actions, corruptions, and belongings; not as God made it, but as sin and Satan and self have marred it. The old Adam never changes; no medicine can heal the disease; no ointment can mollify the corruption; it can only be got rid of by death.”

The various qualities of the nature to be renounced are variously described: in Romans xiii. 22, as “the works of darkness”; in Hebrews xii. 1, as “all encumbrance” (see R.V., margin); in James i. 21, as “filthiness and overflowing of wickedness”; in 1 Peter ii. 1, as “malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings”; in Colossians iii. 8, 9, as “anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking, and lying.”

“The old man” is *incorrigible and incurable*; there is no mending it, educating it, or Christianising it. It remains the same whether you treat it with encouragement or severity. “It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. viii. 7). The old man is *enmity* against God (viii. 7); not merely an enemy, but embodied, unmitigated enmity. Everything about it is hostile to God. It hates His *law* and tramples it under foot. It hates His *will* and contradicts it. It hates His *ways* and refuses to

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walk in them. It hates His *plan* of salvation and refuses to submit to it. "The old man" is *offensive* to God; "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (viii. 8). It is impossible to please Him with anything that appertains to "the flesh"—a phrase which may be used interchangeably with "the old man." The *seed* of the flesh cannot please Him; the *will* of the flesh cannot please Him; the *wisdom* of the flesh cannot please Him; the *glorying* of the flesh cannot please Him; the *confidence* of the flesh cannot please Him; the *warring* of the flesh cannot please Him; the *circumcision* of the flesh cannot please Him. Whether "the old man" appears in all his rottenness, or whether he assumes a religious and attractive guise, he can never be anything but offensive to God.

The apostle says "the old man" is "growing corrupt" (Eph. iv. 22). The use of the present participle indicates the continuance or progress of corruption. The words denote the steady advance of that inward process of disintegration, deterioration, and destruction; that awful rotting away, piecemeal, of the life that is subordinated to the desires of deceit.

The expression "lusts of deceit" refers to every strong passion that fills the soul to the exclusion of God. These lusts are all the likings and longings which listen credulously to the Satanic insinuation, "Ye shall not surely die." Men are thus seduced and ensnared under false pretences, for sin is always an enormous fraud. The lust of making money develops into avarice; the lust of power into tyranny; the lust of pleasure into sensuality. It may be a lust of

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proficiency in physical, political, social, or mechanical science ; but if it engrosses the soul to the exclusion of God, shutting out the desire and pursuit of justification and sanctification in Jesus Christ, it is a result and characteristic of "the old man."

In a most striking manner the Apostle has set the new man in direct antithesis to the old. Adhering a little more closely to the original, the antitheses are still more complete. The actual self and the possible one are contrasted in every point. The one is "the old man," the other is "the new man." The one is "created," the other is "corrupted." The one is "after lusts," fashioned in their likeness ; the other is "after God," fashioned in His. The one consists in "righteousness and holiness," which have their root in "the Truth" ; the other consists in passions which have their foundation "in deceit." The one hastens ever downward to the gulf of ruin ; the other is carried ever upward, and, like the river to its original source, speeds homeward to God.

Professor Findlay powerfully says : "Strangely did the image of Jesus confront the pagan world ; keenly its light smote on that gross darkness. There stood the Word made flesh—purity immaculate, Love in its very Self—shaped forth in no dream of fancy or philosophy, but in the veritable man Christ Jesus. It was the sight of Jesus, and of men like Jesus, that shamed the old world, so corrupt and false and hardened in its sin. When Jesus lived, died, and rose again, an inconceivable revolution in human affairs had been effected. The Cross was planted on the territory of the god of this world ; its

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victory was inevitable. Jesus was the type and the head of a new moral order, destined to control the universe. To see the new and the old man side by side was enough to assure one that the future lay with Jesus. Corruption and decrepitude marked every feature of Gentile life. It was gangrened with vice—‘wasting away in its deceitful lusts’; but the ‘grain of wheat’ had fallen into the ground to die, and though there might be a long, cruel winter, though many a storm and blight might delay its growth, the harvest was secure.”\*

Of all subjects, none is of greater importance than that of possessing an accurate knowledge of the character of “the old man,” because of his power to deceive. He loves to put off his old ways, and call himself a Christian. He knows how to cover his rags and corruption; “to make clean the outside of the cup and platter”; and to appear in a garb so devout and decorous that the very elect are deceived. Christ represents him as claiming, at the last, a life-long intimacy. He has sat with Christ at the same table; he has lived in the streets in which Christ has taught; by His name demons have been cast out, and many mighty works have been done. Yet Christ utterly disowns this religious “old man,” and says, “I never knew you” (Matt. vii. 22, 23; Luke xiii. 26, 27).

How is this renunciation to be accomplished? If we have heard Christ and have been taught in Him, we have surely been made aware, not only of the *necessity* of putting off one nature and of putting on another, but *how* that which is not “after the lusts of

\* “Expositor’s Bible,” Ephesians, pp. 281, 282.

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deceit" may be put off, and that which is "after God" may be put on. Jesus not only taught the Truth of God, but fulfilled all its requirements in Himself. Renunciation is impossible excepting from without. When the powers that should control man are largely gone over to the enemy and become traitors, when the mandates of conscience are treated as so much waste-paper, what becomes of man's power of self-control? He cannot accomplish his own deliverance from the power of "the old man" by struggling, willing, resolving, or self-effort of any kind. "It is as impossible as to execute the gymnastic feat of taking himself by his own coat-collar, and lifting himself up from the ground with his own arms."

The Law, the Pattern, and the Power for complete victory over the old sinful self are to be found, as the Truth is—in *Jesus*. All that we are taught to put away died in Him, just as all that we are taught to put on lives for ever in Him. Condemnation has come upon us through one man, and deliverance from condemnation has come to us through one Man, Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 16, 17). Contemplating his own natural condition, Paul calls himself a "wretched man"—for, as Professor Beet says, if these words refer to a justified person, they stand absolutely alone in the entire New Testament—and asks, Who shall deliver me from the tyranny of "the old man"? Who shall make me another man, and bring me from under condemnation? Then the cry of anguish is lost in the shout of triumph and gratitude; he has found an answer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 25). The pen with which I

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write these lines comes under the designation of matter, and is therefore subject to the law of gravitation. But the law of gravitation has no power over it so long as it is under the law of muscular force. The law of life sets it free from the law of gravitation. Even so the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death (viii. 2). The putting away of "the old man" is only possible as we withdraw our will from the working of this fallen nature in us, and give in our will to the working of Christ in us. The more completely we yield ourselves to the Spirit of Life in Christ, the more completely shall we be delivered from the law of sin. Our sole hope is *in* Christ, and just as we should say of any angel or spirit who was not a partaker of our nature, he is not one of us, so, unless a man be a partaker of Christ, he is none of His. In Christ Jesus the old, corrupt man is supplanted, and "the new man," after the power of an endless life, is created. The filthy garments upon which God's displeasure must ever rest are put off, and the beauteous raiment "According to the Pattern" is put on.

Dr Pierson has recently called attention to the words which are used to describe what John saw in Christ's empty tomb, and which compelled him to believe the miracle of the Resurrection (John xx. 8). Something which John saw convinced him that there had been no mere removal of Christ's body, but a miraculous rising. A careful study of the words used in the Gospels throws much light on this matter. "Matthew uses the word *enetulixen*, a word also used by Luke and John, and which means to 'roll or wrap



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up in,' to 'envelop in rolls or folds,' as of linen wrapping. Mark employs the word *encilesen*, which means also to 'roll up,' as a scroll. In John xix. 39, Nicodemus is said to have come with a hundred pounds of mixture of myrrh and aloes, and they *wound* the body in the linen, with the spices. Here the word is *edēsan*, which means 'to wind about tightly,' so as to *bind*, or *confine*, or *tie up*. The one impression of a careful study of these passages is that the body was wound about with the long linen cloths, the spices being placed in the folds, to preserve it from decay until the more careful and complete embalming after the Sabbath. The effect of such enswathement is obvious. The body would be rendered doubly helpless: first, *weighted down* by the more than a hundred pound weight of clothes and spices, its ordinary weight being nearly doubled; and then made helplessly immovable, even if life were to be restored, by this close wrapping."

Dr Pierson thinks there is no doubt that the Prince of Life *simply slipped out of these wrappings*, without disturbing one of their convolutions, sloughing them off, as no longer able to hold Him, and that John saw them lying on the floor of the sepulchre, *just as they had lain when the body was in them* (John xx. 7). This, he holds, is *what John saw*, and *why* he believed.\* Not only does this afford overwhelming demonstration of the miracle of the Resurrection, but its typical teaching is most suggestive and precious. If we appropriate Christ's resurrection power, which is towards us who believe, we shall be able to "slough

\* See a most interesting letter in *The Christian*, September 8, 1898.



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off," as no longer able to hold and bind us, the habits of a sinful life, the bonds of our former slavery to Satan, and leaving them in the sepulchre among death things, rise with Christ to walk in newness of life. Deliverance is therefore in identification with Christ. We have been taught by Him that our old man is condemned, and is, moreover, crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin (Rom. vi. 6; viii. 3).

### II. *Renewal.*

The negative side of the truth in Jesus is enforced in the decisive "putting away," as clothes that belong to the region of corruption and death, of "the old man." The positive side of the truth is described in the words which follow: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. iv. 23). There is a difference between the word "renewed" and the word "new" in the verse that follows. To be "renewed" is, properly, to be made young again. Decrepitude and decay give place to rejuvenation in the spiritual nature of the inner man. This renewal takes place, not simply in the mind, but in the *spirit* of it. It is the special seat of renewal. The organism of the mind survives as it was, but the spirit which inhabits and governs it is entirely changed. There is a renovation of the ruling and motive power. The love, for example, retains all its ardour, but it attaches itself to objects quite in contrast with those of its earlier preference and pursuit. Connected with the steam locomotive, gliding with such speed along

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the rails, is a piece of mechanism called the *reversing gear*. By the action of this gear the direction of that engine can be completely reversed. Though it is seen proceeding with such speed in one direction, in a few moments, by the application of this mechanism, it may be seen moving with equal velocity in the contrary direction. Sanctification does not change a man's faculties ; it does, however, harmonise, purify, and strengthen them ; and the employment, objects, and motives of his powers are so completely changed that he becomes "a new creation." The new life is so different to the old as to be like the life of another person. "The change is not in the mind psychologically, either in its essence or in its operation ; neither is it in mind, as if it were a superficial change of opinion, either on points of doctrine or of practice ; but it is 'in the *spirit* of the mind,' in that which gives mind both its bent and its materials of thought. It is not simply in the *spirit*, as if it lay there in dim and mystic quietude ; but it is in 'the spirit of the *mind*,' in the power which, when changed itself, radically alters the entire sphere and business of the inner mechanism." \*

We are thus "*being* renewed," and we are transfigured *by* the renewing (Rom. xii. 2). Divine creation is not a mechanical work. A man builds a house, and when he has built it he has done with it, and may never see it again ; still the house stands. An artist paints his picture ; it passes from his easel, is hung in the gallery, and he has done with it. Quite a different relation exists between God and His creatures. The

\* Professor Eadie's "Ephesians," pp. 326, 327.

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universe, which God has made for Himself, would not stand if the Builder were to leave it ; its foundations would shake, its walls be rent, it would sink in ruins. God's fair pictures in sky and sea, in mountain, lake, and river, would immediately lose their glorious beauty if the Divine Artist left them as the other artist does. The Creator is also the Renewer. The sun creates the day when he comes forth from his chamber, but he renews it moment by moment, and but for his renewing, the darkness of night would immediately envelop us. So is it with the regenerate. All would be darkness but for the shining of the Light. All would be death but for the Presence of the Life. There is constantly being communicated to us, in response to our faith, a nature that is really fresh and new.

“ Moment by moment, I live in His love ;  
Moment by moment, I've life from above ;  
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine,  
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.”

### III. *Appropriation.*

“ Put on the new man, which, after God, has been created in Righteousness and Holiness of Truth ” (Eph. iv. 24). “ Put on the new man which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him that created him ” (Col. iii. 10). In the word “ new ” there is not merely the idea of youthfulness, but the *freshness of a higher nature*. In contrast with the gradual renewal of verse 23, this putting on is *once for all*. The “ being renewed ” is a process, this is an act. As one puts off and lays aside one's

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clothing, so, having put off "the old man," we are to put on "the new man," which has already *been created* according to the Pattern, and is therefore waiting to be put on.

This new life is "after God" from its beginning. But in the beginning we bear the image of God only in a rudimentary form. The outline is there, but the details are only reproduced in our nature in proportion to our faith and faithfulness. This newness consists in moral and spiritual characteristics. They are summed up in the words Righteousness, Holiness, and Knowledge. Of the Righteousness and Holiness in which the first Adam resembled God we get but a glimpse, but we have a full view of Jesus, the second Adam, as the Righteous and Holy One; and we are at no loss to understand what these attributes are, in which, by being apparelled with Him, we too may be apparelled.

"Righteousness" refers to human character and conduct. It is the moral rectitude which guides the new man in all his relationships, enabling its possessor to be what he ought to every other creature in the universe. It follows what is right, and does what is right, under all circumstances. Righteousness is the sum of all that should characterise a man's relations both towards man and towards God.

The word "Holiness," as found here, only occurs in this passage and in Luke i. 75. It constitutes our chief likeness to God. It is not a mere equivalent of purity, but it carries the thought of a reference of the whole life to God; the presentation of the whole being to Him as alive from the dead, to be henceforth

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alive for God. It is not an external and technical sanctity, but the reflection of the Holiness of God Himself. The *ethical* side of the Divine Image is brought out in these words in the Ephesian letter, while the parallel passage in Colossians brings out the *intellectual*. He who puts on the new man is "being renewed *unto knowledge*." The word means not only knowledge, but full or perfect knowledge. Just as in Ephesus the renewal in Holiness and Righteousness is contrasted with Gentile "uncleanness" and "greediness," so at Colosse this true knowledge, flowing from renewal of the heart, is contrasted with that to which the false teachers made such pretensions.

The image of the second Adam transcends the first, even as the image of the heavenly transcends the image of the earthly. Jesus came to restore the apparel we had lost, nay, to be to us infinitely more than we had lost. If we attempt to imitate Him we shall produce a grotesque caricature, but if we "put on" the Lord Jesus Christ nothing will be omitted. The difference between a true Christian and a humanly virtuous man is, that the one draws on Christ for everything, and the other draws upon himself. One manufactures a suit for himself, which, when finished, is but a collection of filthy rags; the other finds a complete wardrobe in putting on Him who is "made of God unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30).

The glory which the Father gave to Him He has given us, and of His fulness have all we received, and "grace for grace." What do these last three familiar words mean? Here are two sisters dressed exactly

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alike ; the colour, the texture, the pattern of their dress correspond in every detail. They are said to be alike "pin for pin." The purpose of God is that we should be completely conformed to the image of His Son. Every feature of loveliness that is in Him may be in us, "grace for grace." Whatever may be lacking in our own completeness we can find in Jesus, and by appropriating faith make our own.

"These are the garments which they shall make ; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle" (Exod. xxviii. 4). Without these "holy garments for glory and for beauty" Aaron could not be a priest. They typified the various powers, responsibilities, and qualities connected with his priestly calling. Next the skin was a closely-fitting vesture of the finest linen, "pure and white." It was of damask broidery, without seam—woven from the top throughout—typifying the wearer's integrity ; his moral wholeness or holiness. Above this was "the robe of the ephod." This garment gave a princely character to the high priest. It was all of blue, like the stainless face of heaven, and covered the high priest from head to foot. The bottom of this long robe was ornamented with golden bells and pomegranates (Exod. xxviii. 33-35). The golden bells signified that the covenant people were by obedience to proclaim the commandments of Jehovah. The pomegranates would remind them that they must produce fruit as well as sound. Above this robe was placed "the ephod" proper. It was a superb tunic, formed of two pieces, for the breast and back respectively, which were joined



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together at the shoulders by two massive jewels. On this was fixed the breastplate, with its four rows of precious stones set in it, three in each row. This formed the *prophetic* dress of the high priest. By means of it he learned the counsel of God, and was able thus to declare what course the people should take, or what events were about to happen. Upon his head the high priest wore a mitre of fine linen, emblem of that righteousness and purity which must be manifested in one who stands in the presence of God on behalf of others. Fastened to this linen turban by a purple cord was a golden plate, the object of the mitre being to enable the high priest to wear this plate of gold before the Lord. Deeply engraved on this golden plate was one short expressive sentence, without which he could not appear in the presence of the Lord on behalf of Israel. It was HOLINESS TO THE LORD. One thing was yet lacking to give unity, compactness, completeness, grace, and dignity to the whole. It was "the girdle of the ephod." It was of white linen, but interwoven with threads of gold and blue, purple and scarlet, symbolic, of course, of the Love which must be put on "*above all*," and which is "the bond of perfectness."

As these various garments of holiness, glory, and beauty were put on by the priest, constituting a complete dress, and as without any one of them he would be unfit to appear before the Lord, so we must never rest until we have put on the whole of those garments typified by the embroidered and lovely apparel of which we have been thinking, which await our diligent appropriation in Jesus Christ.



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Dr Dale has thus strikingly put this truth: "We are to '*put on*' Christ. We are to make our own every separate element of His Righteousness and Holiness. We are to make His humility ours, and His courage, His gentleness, and His invincible integrity; His abhorrence of sin, and His mercy for the penitent; His delight in the righteousness of others, and His patience for their infirmities; the quiet submission with which He endured His own sufferings, and His compassion for the sufferings of others; His indifference to ease, and wealth, and honour, and His passion for the salvation of men from all their sins and all their sorrows. We are to make His perfect faith in the Father ours, and His perfect loyalty to the Father's authority; His delight in doing the Father's will; His zeal for the Father's glory. The perfection at which we have to aim is not a mere dream of the imagination, but the perfection which human nature has actually reached in Christ. The fountains of my life are in Him. It is the eternal purpose of the Father that as the branch receives and reveals the life which is in the vine, I should receive and reveal the life which is in Christ. If I am in Christ, the spiritual forces which were illustrated in the righteousness and holiness of Christ's life are already active in my own life. Christ is the prophecy of our righteousness, as well as the sacrifice for our sins, for He came down from heaven to give the very life of God to man, and in the power of that life all righteousness is possible." \*

\* "Lectures on Ephesians," pp. 319-321.

“Lo, Thou art Bread indeed : not the common bread, but Manna ; not the Israelitish manna, ’alas ! that fell from no higher than the region of clouds, and they that did eat it, died with it in their mouths ; but Thou art the Living Bread that came down from the Heaven of Heavens, of Whom whosoever eateth liveth for ever. As for material food, many a one longs for it that cannot get it ; many a one hath it that cannot eat it ; many eat it that cannot digest it ; all that receive it, do but maintain a perishing life, if not a languishing death. But this flesh of Thine, as it was never withheld from any true appetite, so it never yields but wholesome and comfortable sustenance to the soul ; never hath any other issue than an everlasting life and happiness. O Saviour, whensoever I sit at mine own table, let me think of Thine ; whensoever I feed on the bread and meat that is set before me, and feel myself nourished by that repast, let me mind that better sustenance which my soul receives from Thee ; and find Thee more one with me than my bodily food.”

—Dr JOSEPH HALL in “Christ Mystical.”

“ O Corn of Wheat, which God for us did sow  
In the rough furrows of this world of woe,  
That Thou the Bread of Life for us might be,  
To nourish us to all eternity ;  
Grant us, through faith, O Christ, to feed on Thee ! ”

## CHAPTER IX

### *MORAL TRANSUBSTANTIATION*

#### A Life Divinely Sustained

“ **H**OW can this man give us His flesh to eat ? ”  
(John vi. 52). What an arena these words  
and Christ’s answer to them have been for  
controversy ever since they were uttered. One marvels  
at the errors into which men have fallen, and, alas !  
are still falling, because they persist in treating figures  
drawn from the analogies of human life and its laws  
of physical health as they dare not treat such figures  
as a “vine,” a “door,” or a “fold.”

Very pathetic is the situation in which Christ found  
Himself at this stage of His ministry. The crowds  
who followed Him, followed Him for His gifts. “Ye  
seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because  
ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (ver. 26).  
The last miracle they saw was a gross material satis-  
faction to them, and they saw not that it was a parable  
of the longing of Christ to relieve their soul-hunger.  
The words “*were filled*” are literally “were satisfied  
with food as animals with fodder”; and though,  
as Westcott says, because it is used in other

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places it is not possible to press the material idea which predominates in it, the word is exceedingly suggestive.

The purpose of Christ is so completely misapprehended that He sifts the crowds by addressing them in terms sure to offend the non-spiritual among them. He is not among them to give them political privileges, or merely the bread that perishes. He, as the Son of Man, the absolute representative of mankind, will give them the "meat which endures unto everlasting life" (ver. 27). The discourse was not unintelligible, it was offensive. They called it "a hard saying," that is, difficult to receive, accept, appropriate. This new teaching of life through death was a burden too heavy to be borne, and the crowd melted away. Not only the multitude and the ill-disposed Jews, but the disciples, who had hitherto followed Him, when they heard words which made such claims upon their submission, self-devotion, and self-surrender, "went back, and walked no more with Him" (ver. 66). The test had scattered the crowd, and Christ then applied it to the innermost circle of disciples: "Will ye also go away?" The question implies that such desertion is incredible, and yet it was to be feared. Peter's reply is the strong confession that the apostles have found in Christ all that they could seek.

When the Jews discussed the problem raised by Christ's mysterious words, and said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh and

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drinketh My blood hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in Him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father ; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me" (vi. 53-57).

Familiarity with these words has, in some measure, dulled our sense of their strangeness. On any other lips they would have been absurd and blasphemous ; on Christ's lips they are full of deepest meaning, and if we do not get behind the bare words and the analogical character of the whole passage, we shall find ourselves in the midst of those who still strive over what, to minds unillumined by the Holy Ghost, must ever be "a hard saying." The "*eating*" of which Christ speaks in this chapter (note carefully the repetition of the expression) was prefigured by the hidden manna and the shewbread of old (Exod. xvi. 33 ; Rev. ii. 17). These could only be fully seen, as one has wisely reminded us, by those who walked in the light of the golden candlestick in the Sanctuary of God. We need therefore the Spirit's sevenfold light to look at these things, otherwise we shall stumble as did those who first heard them (John vi. 61, R.V.).

The mysterious nature of the subject is evident from the four times repeated "Verily, verily," each heralding a distinct though closely-connected statement. Augustine says that this "Verily, verily," is not the language of friend to friend ; it rather indicates that we know so little of Christ's mind, and

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have so little confidence in Him, that His oath and bond are required by us before we can believe Him. The reiterated "Verily" also reveals to us a Teacher, who, in infinite patience, bears with our slowness and ignorance; who deigns to meet us where we are; and who uses such words to arrest our attention as are needed by a dull intellect and an unresponsive heart.

The *first* of these statements is in verses 26, 27: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him the Father, even God, hath sealed." If we were in no danger of failing to incorporate "the meat which abideth unto eternal life," Jesus would have been less earnest; but because of our apathy and earthliness, He says "Work." The verb stands emphatically at the head of the sentence: "Work; yea, win by work, not the meat which perisheth, but that meat which endureth . . . which the Son of Man shall *give*"; *i.e.*, the believer's work earns not a recompense at the last, but secures a gift. This is the highest *work*, and, because the only enduring work, the most profitable. "What shall we do, that we may work for results that will everlastingly survive?" said the Galileans. Jesus answered: "*This is the work of God*, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (ver. 29). "This simple formula," as Westcott says, "contains the complete solution of the relation of faith and works. Faith is the life of

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works ; works are the necessity of faith." If the Divine is to take the place of the undivine in us, we shall find it to be very real work ; the faith of which Jesus here speaks being, not a single decisive act, but a continuous, active, and intense work of the soul. How prone all men are, like the Galileans, to take and eat the good things with which the world abounds, without understanding that they are at God's banqueting-board, and that He puts into their hand the bread that perishes, to remind them of "the Bread that endureth unto everlasting life." We sometimes give bread to be rid of the hungry suppliant, but God never gives it without at the same time saying, "I want you to eat of Me and live for ever."

Christ does not yet say that this meat must be His flesh—that comes later—but this is implied in the words, "Him hath God the Father sealed." "The allusion is to the well-known practice in the Jewish sacrifices, which could not be offered even in the old carnal service, unless they were according to their proper nature, without blemish ; in which, therefore, every dove, or lamb, or ox brought to be offered had first to be examined by the priest, and if without blemish, to be sealed with the temple seal, which witnessed that the creature was perfect, and therefore fit for God's altar. So Jesus was sealed by God Himself ; when coming to Jordan, the Holy Ghost like a dove came down and rested on Him. The Bread which the new man needs is this unblemished meat, which the Son of Man shall give, for Him hath God the Father sealed ; thus bearing witness that He



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is spotless in the eye of God, and therefore fit, even upon His altar, to be the bread of God." \*

The *second* of these statements is in verses 32, 33: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the Bread out of heaven; but My Father giveth you the true Bread out of heaven. For the Bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." When our Lord pointed out to the Galileans that the work of God was to believe in Him, they demanded a further sign as evidence that He was God's messenger: "What sign doest Thou that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; the bread they ate was from heaven, not common barley loaves such as we got from You yesterday. Have You any such sign as this to give? If You are sent from God, we may surely expect You to rival Moses." The answer, stamped with Christ's "Verily, verily," was, "Moses gave you bread from heaven in an inferior sense. In giving Me, My Father has given you the true Bread from heaven, the Bread of God which giveth life unto the world. Has anything that Moses ever gave you given you life? I am the Bread of Life."

Note how repeatedly our Lord designates this true Bread as that which "*cometh down from heaven.*" No less than seven times are these words found in this series of discourses (vers. 32, 33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58). To live on the earth, we must needs eat the things that come out of the earth; and to support the heavenly life we must have heavenly food; and just

\* Jukes, "The New Man," p. 90.

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as the earthly life hungers for and instinctively recognises the bread that perishes, so the heavenly life longs for and knows the food of its own world. The spirit is only fed by that which is spirit, and even if the flesh could be eaten, in a literal sense, it would not be spirit food, for "*the flesh profiteth nothing*" (ver. 63).

Our Lord's *third* statement on this subject is contained in verses 47-51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and died. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." If we can patiently follow the thoughts which have led up to this third statement, we shall see wherein it marks an advance upon the other two. Jesus has been followed because of a miracle which made a few barley loaves into food for thousands (vers. 22-24). Having rebuked the bread-seeking spirit which indicated a false attachment, Christ declares Himself to be man's true food, the Bread of Life (vers. 26-29). The Jews demand a sign from heaven, like the manna which they say their fathers ate. He claims, say they, to have brought spiritual and eternal food to men: where is the proof of His power analogous to that which He had exercised in the world of matter? (vers. 30, 31). The manna which their fathers ate in the desert was; Jesus replies, the

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gift of God. Moses was only the messenger of His Father. The Father is *ever giving*, and the manna was only one instance of that which is constant; the manna was a gift to one unit in the Father's family, it is now a gift to the whole world (vers. 32-35).

Now we come to this third statement. How pregnant every word is! Jesus had, in verse 40, declared the Father's will, that every one seeing the Son and believing on Him may have eternal life. The Father's will was being accomplished, for the Son was then standing before them in human form, and for the believer eternal life was of the actual present: "*he hath everlasting life.*" The essence of life is unseen; bread is the visible form which contains and imparts it. The invisible God is the source of eternal life; the human nature of the Son of God is the visible form which contains and imparts this to the souls of men. "I am," says Jesus, "the Bread of Life." Those who ate the manna died. Those who feed on Me shall not die. The manna was special in time and in circumstance; I am true sustenance for all times and for all circumstances. Christ had twice previously spoken of Himself as the Bread of Life, *i.e.*, characterised by life and producing life. Now He speaks of Himself as "the Living Bread," *i.e.*, *containing the principle of life*. They wanted bread from heaven: He is Bread from heaven (ver. 51). The lifeless manna fell and lay upon the ground until the people gathered it, and it became corrupt if they did not. He is the Bread containing Life in Himself, coming by His own act and will from heaven; living among men, imparting life to those who eat

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by coming to and believing on Him; so that this principle of Life in Him becomes in them also a principle of Life which cannot die, but shall live for ever.\*

Christ has already taught them that the life they needed was in Himself, and that it could only be appropriated by means of faith in Himself. Now He points out another feature of the parallel: *bread must be broken to be eaten*. He must die that the Life in Him may be communicated. It is in the death of the Cross that He becomes the Bread of Life. "The Bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jesus thus identifies the Bread of which He has spoken with His flesh. "The Jews therefore strove among themselves." In verse 41 there was murmuring; in verse 52 there was contention; in verse 61 there was stumbling; in verse 66 there was separation.

The *fourth* statement is in verses 53-57, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by reason of the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by reason of Me." Note that in the exclamation of horror in verse 52, the Jews have added "*to eat*" to what Christ had said about His flesh. Christ not only accepts what they have added to His words, but

\* I am indebted to Archdeacon Watkins on St John.

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He further startles them by telling them that they must "drink His blood," an amazing statement to a Jew, who was forbidden to taste even the blood of animals. Let us beware, in seeking to understand these words, of the temptation to pare them down to some narrow meaning which is on a level with our present apprehension.

Many believe to-day in what is called Transubstantiation, a miraculous change of the substance of the bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper, into the body and blood of Christ, while the outward appearance of the elements remains the same. Many believe also in what is called Consubstantiation, the co-existence in the elements of what is truly bread and wine with the mystical but real presence of the body and blood of Christ. One would have thought it to be impossible, two thousand years after these mysterious words were spoken, to have pressed them to what is scarcely any advance on the position of the Jews. Surely the verse which constitutes the key to the whole series of discourses has been lost sight of: "The *flesh* profiteth nothing; My words, they are spirit, and they are life" (ver. 63). The words, of course, refer to that which can only be appropriated physically like the manna. Even Christ's flesh in this sense "profiteth nothing." Suppose a supernatural act of Transubstantiation were to transpire at the Table of the Lord; and if the bread were actually changed into the body of Jesus Christ, and the wine into His blood, the mere reception of these would leave us, so far as our moral and spiritual condition is concerned, just where we were before. We must

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therefore look beneath the surface for the proper significance of these mysterious words.

Note the expression the "flesh of *the Son of Man*." That is Christ's favourite name. He almost always speaks of Himself as "the Son of Man." We find it more than fifty times in the Gospels, and often in a peculiar and strikingly significant sense. The expression is equivalent to His calling Himself the Son of Humanity, as humanity exists in the Father, of whom He is "the Only-Begotten Son." He is humanity brought out to view—its root, and fulness, and crown. The expression speaks of man according to God's mind, as he came forth from God. Humanity apart from Him has no complete existence; it is an ideal waiting its fulfilment. "The Son of Man" is our proper name, lost, it is true, in Adam, but recovered again in Christ Jesus. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are made full in Him. In the Pattern Man we see what God's purpose is towards us. It is that we should return out of our fallen life into that which is unfallen; out of that which is empty into that which is full; out of that which is undivine into that which is Divine; out of that which is broken into that which is complete; out of the humanity with the blight of sin upon it, into the Humanity which has been manifested in the Son of Man, with the beauty of God upon it. "I am in the Father," said Jesus, "and the Father is in Me." By the coming of the Eternal Son into man's nature, the fulness of the Godhead has dwelt in man. In the Son of Man "God's very life and image have been manifested in man, free from all fear of further fall



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and failure. God in Him for ever had become man, that man might be Divine."

This is the flesh which He gives for the life of the world ; that eating it, we may recover our lost glory, and be built up again in the undivided image of the Son of Man. We have put on the new man, and are now being renewed after the image of Him that created us, as we saw in the last chapter. Just as "the old man" which was put off had his proper food, so the new man needs his proper food, and can no more live without it than we can live here without the meat and drink of this world. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life : and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is true meat, and My blood is true drink."

The babe in nature takes in its mother's flesh and blood, and grows thereby, without in the least knowing or understanding either what it takes in or how this nourishment is communicated ; so it is with us who are quickened with Christ's life and born of Him. "We live by Him, while yet we understand little or nothing of that on which we live, or how we are sustained by it. But it is Christ's flesh that feeds or supports us : it is something of His very nature that we take in, that through a real receiving and appropriating of His substance there may be formed in us a spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible body or temple, for God abidingly to dwell in."

This eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man is



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### I. *Vital.*

Note how frequently Christ uses the word "*living*," in contrast to the manna upon which their fathers fed in the wilderness, and which so soon became corrupt ; in contrast also to the dead barley loaves upon which they had just been feeding. The same law seems to hold good both of physical and spiritual life. Physical life can only be sustained by food that has been alive. Living plants and animals must have assimilated the nutritive properties of the earth and the air before they can be of any use to us. The plant seizes upon the sustenance which God has stored up in the earth ; we can live upon the plant, but not upon the earth. The ox finds nourishment in the grass ; we can live on the ox, but not on the grass. So with spiritual nutriment. Abstract truth is of little value to us : we cannot feed upon that ; it needs to be embodied in a living form before we can live upon it. The truth becomes nutritive when the Word becomes flesh, and we are able to say, "of His fulness have all we received."\* There are various kinds of living food for man's physical needs. Flesh and bread nourish and build up the coarser, heavier powers of his body. Fruit supplies the higher needs of the animal nature. Then the air, and the ether within the air, are essential meat. Light also, and the solar electricity within the light, are vital essences. Is it a matter of surprise that He who has made this vital, this abundant provision for the perishing body, should make provision for the imperishable spirit? He

\* I am indebted for this thought to Dr Marcus Dods.

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knows I have, in addition to a physical life which is wonderful, and a mental life which is still more wonderful, a nature which cannot feed on anything but the flesh and blood of the Son of Man; and He has provided Jesus as the perfect, satisfying Food of the soul, for "Him hath God the Father sealed" (ver. 27). There is the God we are to grow like unto; He is out-built and expressed in the Son of Man; in Him are the hidden glories of the Father. Living, intense faith, therefore, is an appetite for every Divine property, and in proportion to our eating will be our renewal in the likeness of God. By God's own wonderful power, He will subdue all things in us to Himself, and we shall one day awake with the Father's seal upon us, made in every respect like unto the Son of Man, who is the First-born among many brethren. Well might Jesus say: "*Work, yea, work*, not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life" (ver. 27).

This eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man is

### II. *Strengthening.*

It has been pointed out that four times (vers. 54, 56, 57, 58) the word Jesus uses is *trōgō*. It is the word especially used of the feeding of herbivorous and ruminating animals, and points to that chewing the cud or meditation which is necessary if we would feed aright on Christ. When we "consider" Jesus, then does this Divine Food become nourishing and strengthening. Jesus declared, "My flesh is Meat indeed, My Blood is drink indeed" (ver. 55). It is

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opposed, that is to say, to unsubstantial symbols, for the Jews were now, alas ! feeding on symbolism. They were spending their money for that which was not bread ; and their labour for that which satisfied not. The Paschal Feast had become a mere form ; the flesh of the lamb brought no spiritual life, because the vail was upon their heart. They lived in the region of the outward ; and when the Bread of Life stood in their midst to declare Paradise regained, and the way to the Tree of Life no longer barred by a flaming sword, they knew Him not for Whom they had so eagerly looked and so earnestly longed. " Food," says Phillips Brooks, " is strength *in* a man, not strength *without* a man. It is strength *incorporated*, and not strength *applied*. To feed on Christ, then, is to get His strength into us to be our strength. You feed on the corn-field, and the strength of the corn-field comes into you and is your strength. You feed on the corn-field and then go and build your house, and it is the corn-field in your strong arm that builds the house, that cuts down the trees, and piles the stone, and lifts the roof into its place. You feed on Christ and then go and live your life, and it is Christ in you that lives your life, that helps the poor, that fights the battle, that wins the crown. The moral qualities of Christ's nature enter into us as we eat. His strength, His purity, His courage, His truth, His compassion, His mercifulness—in one word, His Holiness, the perfectness of His moral life. This is the strength of which we eat, and which, like true food, enters into us and becomes truly ours while it is still His." As bread is eaten, assimilated, absorbed,

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and afterwards turned into blood, flowing through all the veins and going to build up the body, so the character of the Son of Man becomes as really ours as the food of yesterday, and Christ becomes literally our Life, enabling us to say with the Apostle, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20). If what we eat or drink is not assimilated, it not only does us no good but we receive positive harm. These wonderful and unspeakably precious truths must not only be in our Bible, and in our intellect, they must be in our heart, thus becoming part and parcel of our very life, or they will harm us; for is it not written, "We have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard"? (Heb. iv. 2). What the gastric juice is to the body, faith is to the soul. Faith appropriates and assimilates the Risen Son of Man, extracting nutriment from His Life, His Death, His Resurrection, His Ascension, His Enthronement. He gives Himself wholly to every believing sinner: all the virtue of His death; all the sustenance of His life: all His influence with the Father; all the wonderful dynamic of the Spirit; all His presence through all the days. Well may He say, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?"

And we are nourished by being cleansed; for it is the office of the blood in the body both to nourish

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and to cleanse. Pure blood formed from pure food, flowing through every artery and vein, carries away diseased and effete matter, and renews the whole body. Even so the life-blood of Christ, flowing through the believer's heart, carries nourishment to every part, and cleanses all the inward life: "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

This eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man is

### III. *Unifying.*

"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me" (vers. 56, 57). The union which results from the communication of His Life is an abiding one. As we feed upon the Son of Man, He imparts His perfect humanity to us. We are incorporated into Christ, and Christ incorporates Himself in us. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." "We are members of His flesh and of His bones." Christ is the centre and circumference of our life: the source from which it springs, the inexhaustible supply as it rolls onward, carrying blessing and gladness in its path, and the ocean into which it runs.

In verse 57 Christ speaks first of the living Father, then of the living Son, and then of the living believer. Complete devotion to the Father was the essence of the life of the Son, which He declares He lived by reason of the Father; and complete devotion

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to the Son, deliverance from all self-originating life, is the essence of the life of the believer. The climax of the revelation is reached in the words, "he that eateth Me." First, Jesus speaks of eating the Bread; then of eating the flesh of the Son of Man; now He speaks of our eating Himself: He asks us to appropriate Him, to take Him, to have none but Him; and, as the Communion service has it, we "feed on HIM in our hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving." The Incarnate Word, the glorious Son of Man, the crown and perfection of Humanity, is nigh thee—in the written Word; in the spoken word; in the broken bread; in the poured-out wine. He will make Himself known to thee in the daily breaking of bread; He will speak to thee in Nature, in Providence, but, most of all, in Grace.

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit  
can meet—

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and  
feet." \*

Who of us can say, as did the martyr Ignatius: "I have no delight in the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, the Heavenly Bread, the Bread of Life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of Abraham; and I desire the Drink of God, namely, His blood, which is incorruptible Love and eternal Life."

\* Tennyson, "The Higher Pantheism," p. 277.





“ DARK the night, the snow is falling ;  
Through the storm are voices calling ;  
Guides mistaken and misleading,  
Far from home and help receding.  
Vain is all those voices say :  
‘ Show me Thy way ! ’

“ Blind am I as those that guide me ;  
Let me feel Thee close beside me !  
Come as light into my being !  
Unto me be eyes, all-seeing !  
Hear my one heart’s wish, I pray :  
‘ Show me Thy way ! ’

“ Son of Man, and Lord immortal,  
Opener of the heavenly portal,  
In Thee all my hope is hidden ;  
Never yet was soul forbidden  
Near Thee, always near, to stay :  
‘ Show me Thy way ! ’

“ Thou must lead me, and none other,  
Truest Lover, Friend, and Brother,  
Thou art my soul’s shelter, whether  
Stars gleam out or tempests gather ;  
In Thy presence night is day :  
‘ Show me Thy way ! ’ ”

## CHAPTER X

### *"SHOW ME NOW THY WAY"*

#### A Life Divinely Directed

**I**N a remarkable sermon on "Every Man's Life a Plan of God," Horace Bushnell remarks that to many people life is a purposeless and aimless thing. They go forward complaining and sighing, and while they are obliged to admit that some few are equipped by God to do great works and fill important places, they lament that there is no particular object in their existence; what life means for them they do not know, they scarcely conceive that it means anything at all. A brief study of the Scriptures will at once correct this impression, for in all sorts of ways it upholds the dignity of common life, and gives a meaning to its appointments which the natural dulness and lowness of human opinion cannot apprehend. It teaches that in conditions of obscurity and depression the work of preparation is going on, by which the commonest offices are to become the first chapter of a great and powerful history, and that "he that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in much, while he that is unjust in the least will be unjust also in much."

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God has a particular care, the Scriptures also teach, for every man. How Jesus loved to enforce this truth! Now He does it by speaking of the grass of the field, and now by selecting an insignificant little bird—a sparrow—five of which could be purchased in the market at Jerusalem for two farthings; “Yet,” He says, “not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God” (Luke xii. 7). Who but Jesus would have dreamed of getting theology out of sparrows! “*Not one of them is forgotten.*” The brief and often tragic history of the poor little bird, of which the Son of Man deigns to speak, is fully known to God. He notices it, and cares for it when it chirps “alone upon the housetop”; and when the little fluttering thing falls, struck by stick or stone, by disease or decay, “it does not fall on the ground,” Jesus says, “without your Father.” Each tiny creature’s life, in all its extent, is seen and known and borne in mind by Him to Whom it owes that life.

There is a beautiful passage of Victor Hugo’s in relation to this subject, which I will venture to quote in full. “We talk,” he says, “about God’s remembering us, as if it were a special effort, a laying hold by His great mind of something outside of Himself, which He determined to remember. But if we could only know how truly we belong to God, it would be different. God’s remembrance of us is the natural claiming of our life by Him as a true part of His own. When the spring comes, the oak tree, with its thousands upon thousands of leaves, is alive all over. The great heart of the oak tree remembers every remotest tip of every farthest branch, and sends to

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each the message and the power of new life. It is no harder work for the oak to feed and sustain and remember a million leaves, than to feed and remember only one. The thrill of common life is passed on, without effort to each. We may be far-off leaves upon the great tree of God's life; but we are remembered by Him just as the heart remembers the finger-tips to which it sends the crimson blood.”

Closely related to this truth of a Divinely appointed sphere of life and service is the question of Guidance. God must have, as we remarked in the first chapter, a Pattern to which He purposes to conform our life. There must be in His heart, for every human soul, a complete and perfect plan; and when the life is surrendered to Him, that plan unfolds, hour by hour, as do the trees and flowers in the spring-time. This explains the wondrous wealth of teaching in the Word of God about Guidance. In order that we may remember that righteousness is *chosen* submission to the will of God, and that He has given us the awful power of *refusing* the place and the duties He appoints, the firmament of God's Word glitters with words of authority and promise relating to this subject. Let us notice—

### I. *The Conditions of the Divine Guidance.*

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct (or make plain) thy paths” (Prov. iii. 5, 6). “The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way” (Ps. xxv. 9). “I am the Light of the

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world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). "If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him" (John xi. 9, 10). Here, then, are some of the conditions of Guidance. A will, absolutely surrendered to God, is implied in all of them. This is the first condition. Sin is the following of our own thoughts of what is wise and good, and not God's. It is the putting of human preferences before Divine obligations, and where sin is reigning God cannot reign. Hence it is the "light of life" that is promised, and not the life of light, which is Satan's counterfeit of the truth. We have no organs of spiritual perception until the life comes. The senses of the soul, by which we are enabled intelligently and readily to follow the directions of God, lie dormant and useless until we have opened the gates of our nature to the Life-Giver. Then with true spiritual life will come a capability for spiritual Guidance. "The natural man knoweth not the *things* of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). The New Testament word for "truth" signifies not truth as a *thought*, but truth as a *thing*; not truth as an idea, but truth as a reality. The natural man may receive the thoughts of the Spirit of God, but the spiritual man receives the realities represented by the ideas. Hence the new birth means a new insight into the true nature of things.

It was of those who had renounced the goat nature

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that Jesus spoke when He said: “The sheep hear His voice; and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When He hath put forth all His own, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice” (John x. 3, 4). It is to the man who knows the blessedness of conviction (ver. 3), confession (ver. 5), forgiveness (ver. 5), communion (ver. 6), appropriation (ver. 7), and gladness (ver. 7), that there comes the promise, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye” (Ps. xxxii. 8).

But beyond this, there must be the complete breaking down of the spirit of independence which clings with such tenacity to our fallen nature. If “the old man” is not delivered over to crucifixion in the unity of Christ’s death; if he is still allowed a foothold in our soul, we shall be painfully conscious of the existence of a secret bias of self-interest and prejudice. The turbulent and deceitful workings of the carnal nature will contradict and antagonise the Divine will, and expose us to the assaults and seductions of the spirits that are not of God. When God has cleansed us from all our filthiness and all our idols; when He has given us a new heart and put a new spirit within us; when He has taken away the stony heart, and given us a heart of flesh; then He says, “I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezek. xxxvi. 27). “I knew Jesus,” said George Fox, “and He was very precious to my soul; but I found something in me that would

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not keep sweet, and patient, and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and *when I gave Him my will*, He came into my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut the door."

There will always be difficulties about Guidance if we are content to be superficial in our spiritual life. Sin produces inertia and idleness, and unless we are determined to have done with trifling about holiness, and to have our life marked by thoroughness and reality, our experience will be shallow and intermittent, and fatal to a clear knowledge of the will of God. Going back to the conditions so clearly revealed in the Word of God—there must not only be no reliance upon, but no *leaning* to our own understanding; there must be an acknowledgment of God in *all* our ways; there must be the child-heart, the humble and dependent spirit which longs to be guided and taught; there must be the close and continuous following of Jesus; and there must be such a walking in the light as will enable us to fulfil our work without halting or stumbling.

### II. *The Character of the Divine Guidance.*

The various methods of Guidance by which, in the old days, God indicated His will to His people are very interesting. The most familiar is that of the pillar of cloud and fire. When the Israelites were on the march, it appeared, probably, like an enormous cloud of smoke, visible to all in the pathway, and



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moving on with majestic form, like some heavenly being showing them their way. When the camp halted, the cloud covered it like a curtain, becoming a welcome pavilion, under which the people were sheltered from the desert sun, and hidden in the presence of God. What a beautiful spectacle it must have presented, when, like a mother-bird spreading abroad her brooding wings, the cloud covered the camp on every side (Ps. cv. 39). When journeying in the darkness, there was no danger of losing their way, for the cloud went before them, and threw its comforting light around them. When the people feared the presence of enemies, the cloud took up its position behind them, forbidding their foes to approach, much less to attack, God's protected ones (Exod. xiv. 19, 20). The distinctive feature of the whole of their movements in the wilderness was that Jehovah was in the cloud, and that He alone controlled its movements, and thereby the movements of the camp. “At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they encamped: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they remained encamped. And when the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And sometimes the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; then, according to the commandment of the Lord they remained encamped, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And sometimes the cloud was from evening until morning: and when the cloud was taken up in the morning,

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they journeyed ; or if it continued by day and by night, when the cloud was taken up they journeyed. Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, abiding thereon, the children of Israel remained encamped, and journeyed not ; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they encamped, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed : they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses" (Num. ix. 18-23).

By this Guidance they learned *the blessedness of a surrendered will*. A more delightful picture of absolute dependence upon God, and subjection to His will, it is impossible to conceive. The people were wholly cast upon Him for every step of the way. To a will in antagonism to His, no life could be so intolerable. To a will in harmony with His, no life could be so blessed. Again and again their natural energy and impulsiveness would be rebuked, and reduced to a condition of stillness and rest.

When not under the Directorship of the Holy Spirit, the natural sensibilities are, as a rule, ill-regulated, agitated, and turbulent. Men of the world are either externally or internally agitated men. They are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, and the surface of their nature is constantly disturbed. On the contrary, they who are really led by the Holy Spirit are subdued, patient, quiet. There may be occasional agitations, arising from purely instinctive impulses, which do not recognise the control of the

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reason and the will, but, as a rule, God's own tranquillity garrisons their heart and mind. The subjection of fleshly impulses and of natural energy through identification with the death of Christ is the first lesson the Holy Spirit will teach. “If ye live after the flesh, ye must die: but if ye by the Spirit so make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God*” (Rom. viii. 13, 14).

By this Guidance they learned also *freedom from carefulness*. They were obliged to take short views of life. To burden themselves with what might be lying in the future was as wicked as it was useless. They were obliged to live a moment at a time; for before the hour arrived for carrying out some self-originated plan, they might be removed miles from the spot where it was hoped to carry it into execution. Anxiety about the future does not empty to-morrow of its sorrows, but it does empty to-day of its strength. Sufficient for each day, as Jesus said, is the burden that properly belongs to it.

By this Guidance they learned the lesson of absolute *dependence*. The people were wholly dependent on the movements of the cloud. To choose their own path for a single day; to refuse in any march to follow their Guide, would have been to break away from Him who was not only their Director, but their Protector and Provider. Farewell to the manna, the water, and the shade, if they took their life for an hour into their own hands. They never knew in the morning whether they were to go backwards or forwards, or to stay where they were. They waited in

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ignorance till the cloud moved, and they followed in ignorance till it halted.

This spirit of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will was *the* characteristic of the Son of Man. He took the place of dependence which the first Adam refused to take. He became nothing that God might be all, and the mere reading of the passages in which He uses the words *not* and *nothing*, in renouncing all power of self-originating life and service, furnish a remarkable commentary on this aspect of Christ's life. They are all found in John's Gospel (v. 19, 30, 41; vi. 38; vii. 16, 28; viii. 28, 42, 50; xiv. 10, 24). Let us look at the first of these only for a moment. Christ says in effect: "I can of Mine own self do nothing; you can. What you do reveals simply your own character, betrays your own perverted will. You follow simply your own impulses, without regard to the will of God. I do nothing without a conviction that it is the Father's will. I will to do that only which He wills. It was because I was conscious at every step that the Father went with Me, that I went to the Pool of Bethesda; if I spoke, it was because the Father gave Me the words; and that My words were those of the Father is evident from the result—the man was made whole. Thus I am proclaimed to be the Son of God. The Son can do nothing of Himself, only what He seeth the Father do."

This entire self-abnegation must be ours if our life is to be built "According to the Pattern." That it is a life of perfect peace and joy goes without saying, for who can lose anything who wills to become nothing,

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that God may be all in all. Why should we hesitate to take the place of the creature? Our future is in the hands of Him who was nailed to the Cross for us. Those pierced hands hold the reins of the government of the universe. By what kind of path we shall be led next week, next month, next year, we cannot tell. God has not promised us a chart, but a Guide. If He gave us a chart, and we saw in the near or distant future rough roads and rugged mountains, it would only terrify us. We shall always find the Alpen-stock at the foot of the mountain. The tribe of Asher was located upon a rocky sea-coast, and Jehovah's promise was: “Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. xxxiii. 25). The path was to be stony, but the shoes were to be strong.

“God holds the key of all unknown,  
And I am glad;  
If other hands should hold the key,  
Or if He trusted it to me,  
I might be sad.

“I cannot read His future plans;  
But this I know:  
I have the smiling of His face,  
And all the refuge of His grace,  
While here below.”

By this Guidance they learned lessons of *watchfulness*. If during their wanderings the cloud led God's people anywhere near a heathen people, any proposal to go among them to gratify the cravings of an unsanctified curiosity would have been met by the answer that such a step would take them out of sight of

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the cloud, and therefore it would be a step fraught with infinite peril. "I will instruct thee and teach thee," says God, "in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in, else they will not come near unto thee" (Ps. xxxii. 8, 9). The Greek word for man signifies the upward-looking one, in contrast with the brute, who is formed to look downwards. With a thoroughly obedient and affectionate child a look of guidance is sufficient. He does not wait until the parent has issued an actual prohibition or imposed an absolute command. Such a child will take direction from the eyes, from a turn of the countenance, from a gesture. God wants His children to look out for the hints as well as the commands; for the wishes obscurely intimated as well as precepts unmistakably expressed. When the greatest delight of life becomes the doing of the Father's will, there is a searching of His Word, in which the child feels not only as though he were hearkening to the Father's voice, but as though he were studying his Father's countenance for directions as to how to act.

We can have Guidance either by the Father's eye or by the bit and bridle of circumstances. If, like the horse or mule, we have no spiritual understanding, instead of guiding us with His eye, God has to curb us with His hand. There can, of course, be no Guidance by the eye unless there is constant attention on the one side and constant superintendence on the other. The promise, "I will counsel thee with Mine



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eye upon thee,” implies the existence of a disposition of watchfulness and of readiness to note God’s hand in the minutest occurrences of life. It implies also the possession of such a knowledge of His will and of such spiritual understanding as enables its possessor to look at first causes in everything, like him who, when a prisoner in Rome, did not speak of himself as a prisoner of Cæsar, but as “a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (Philemon 1).

God never curbs us with His hand unless He has failed to guide us with His eye. Where the look has been scorned the bridle must be fastened. If He is compelled to use methods which suggest restraint and coercion, it is because we are inattentive and self-willed. The only guidance for the horse is the bit and bridle, and the more self-willed the horse the severer the bit and the stronger the bridle. A look would be lost upon a horse or a mule. How often the look has been lost upon us because we have been out of touch with God; claiming to be His friends, yet following Him afar off; sad and depressed because of no perfect understanding; knowing nothing of freedom because under the bit and bridle; unable to sing because of the bit in the mouth.

The words of our Lord in John viii. 12, though strong in the English rendering, are still more emphatic in the Greek. The negative is in its strongest form: “He that followeth Me *shall by no means* walk in darkness.” As one has said, there can be no *doubt*, “he shall by no means”; there can be no *limit*, “he that followeth”; there can be no *halting*, “he that followeth.” On the one side there is the loving,



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patient Guide, and on the other there is the docile and obedient child, following with no laggard steps, and singing as he follows :

“ Not a cloud doth arise to darken the skies,  
Or hide for one moment my Lord from my eyes.”

Another suggestive mode of Guidance in Old Testament days is that of the “silver trumpets.” “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two silver trumpets; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps” (Num. x. 1, 2). All the movements of the great host, as the reading of the whole of these verses clearly shows, were regulated by the silver trumpets. Any movement, whether religious, progressive, hostile, or festive, that was not the result of that familiar sound, was not pleasing to God, because it was the fruit of a restless and unsubdued will. The people were as dependent upon the sound of the trumpet as upon the movement of the cloud. Because the mind and will of God can only be known and communicated in priestly nearness and communion, this high privilege was granted to the sons of Aaron. They watched the guiding pillar, and when its first movements were observed they communicated the same to the most distant parts of the camp. When the trumpets sounded to move onwards, it would have been rebellion to refuse; when the trumpets sounded for battle, it would have been rebellion not to gird on the armour. All God asked for was a prompt, implicit, and glad response to His revealed will. To move

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onward without this Divine direction would have been to move onwards in the dark; and to have refused to move when God's mind had been declared would have been to have remained in the dark. They feasted and fought, they journeyed and halted, they shouted as warriors and sang as worshippers, in simple obedience to the trumpet-call.

The advantage of years will be lost in an hour unless we learn this lesson. God has spoken to us in His Word, and when false prophets and seducing spirits would lead us astray, our court of appeal is: “To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. viii. 20). If there is any doubt or perplexity about any subject, let the Word of God be sought for direction.

It is sometimes stated that His Word deals rather with principles than with the detailed application of those principles. There is much more explicit direction in the Bible than is often supposed, and we shall find ourselves in few positions in life concerning which clear direction may not be found. Our obedience to that Word will be as truly obedience to God's Voice as though He spoke afresh from Heaven for our own personal direction. Disregard of that Word is nothing less than rebellion, and they who habitually disregard the authority of Christ will do well to remember that solemn statement to the Jews: “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John xii. 48). The Word may be disobeyed, but it cannot be banished.

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It is refused as the Guide, but it clings to the hearer as the Judge.

There is yet another mode of Guidance in the Old Dispensation which has its counterpart in the New. It is found, like the others, in the Book of Numbers. "And they set forward from the mount of the Lord three days' journey : and the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them" (x. 33). The usual place for the Ark was, no doubt, with the Sanctuary, but on this occasion, as at the passage of the Jordan and the taking of Jericho, the Ark went to the front. Is there anything that leads to this departure from the order laid down at the opening of this book? It would appear as if there were. Moses had just requested his father-in-law, Hobab, to accompany them. He declined, saying : "I will not go ; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred." And Moses said, "Leave us not, I pray thee ; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes" (x. 30, 31). Why did Moses, with such a provision as the cloud and the silver trumpets, want the eyes of Hobab? Our own heart furnishes the answer. We prefer a Hobab we can see to a God Whom we cannot see. The spirit of independence is so strong in us ; we are so prone to be guided by the eyes of flesh and to rely upon the arm of flesh, that when some frail fellow-mortal undertakes to be our director, we move with greater confidence than when, in naked faith, we are called to follow the direction of the living God. Moses turns to Hobab for Guidance,

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but the mighty God, in infinite love and condescension, goes before His people, to search out a resting-place for them. The Ark is a perfect type of the Lord Jesus, and here we have, in addition to the Spirit of God typified by the cloud, and the Word of God typified by the silver trumpets, the Example of our Lord. Let us hear, in the light of this word, the voice which says to us, “Follow Me.” In those perplexing moments of our life ; those crises, when such tremendous issues hang upon a right decision ; those hours of suffering and reproach for His sake, which He alone can understand ; let us not forget that He, the Son of Man, who lived a spotless life under such conditions as those in which we find ourselves, has suffered for us, “leaving us an Example, that we should follow His steps” (1 Pet. ii. 21). The Greek word for “Example” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and means a copy set by a drawing-master, which was to be exactly reproduced by his pupils. In the last clause of the verse the figure changes to that of a guide along a difficult route, so difficult that those who follow must put their feet in his footprints. Many a difficult problem will be solved by asking ourselves, What, under these circumstances, would Jesus say? What, under these circumstances, would Jesus do?

It is interesting to notice that the cloud is immediately mentioned after this reference to the Ark : “And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp” (Num. x. 34). These twin-symbols of the Divine presence were not far removed from each other. It would seem from

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this expression about the cloud that it spread itself backwards, overshadowing the host as it followed, a delightful refreshment amid the burning heat of the desert, and a guiding pillar through its trackless wastes. The Guidance of God is not only that which illumines our path, but that which refreshes and nourishes our souls.

All inward impressions produced by the Holy Spirit, as to our taking a certain line of conduct, will be strengthened and intensified as we wait before God. If the impressions are not of the Holy Spirit, but of the spirits of evil, who would delight to lead us astray, they will become weaker, and will finally disappear as we seek Guidance from God. It is scarcely necessary to add that the mind of the Spirit cannot be clearly and definitely ascertained, in cases of practical action and duty, except in connection with Providential dispensations. Such dispensations are the outward light, which corresponds to and throws a reflex illumination upon the inward light. If truly led by the Spirit of God, we shall keep an open eye upon the Divine Providence as a true interpreter of the inward spiritual leadings. "My soul could not incline itself on the one side or the other," said Madame Guyon, "since another will had taken the place of its own, but only nourished itself with the daily Providences of God."

There cannot possibly be any conflict between these various modes of Guidance. The Spirit of God, the Word of God, the Son of God, the Providence of God, will all work together in the most delightful harmony for the illumination and Guidance of every

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soul that truly and continuously prays, “Show me now Thy way.” All leading, of course, claims following. It demands a docile, child-like, obedient spirit. It demands a circumcised heart to love God and Him alone; a circumcised neck to gladly bear His easy yoke; a circumcised eye to see only His face; a circumcised ear to hear only His voice; a circumcised will to delight in every expression of His will, and to say, as did a saint of a few years ago, “I could lie down and find rest and safety in all circumstances. Oh, it is a blessed thing to sink into the will of God in all things. Absolute resignation to the Divine will baffles a thousand temptations, and absolute confidence in the Saviour carries us triumphantly through a thousand trials.”

“ Let Him lead thee blindfold onwards,  
Love needs not to know;  
Children whom the Father leadeth  
Ask not where they go.  
Though the path be all unknown  
Over moors and mountains lone.

“ Give no ear to reason’s questions,  
Let the blind man hold  
That the sun is but a fable  
Men believed of old.  
At the breast the babe will grow;  
Whence the milk, he need not know.”

“ O, MASTER, at Thy feet  
I bow in rapture sweet !  
Before me, as in darkling glass,  
Some glorious outlines pass  
Of love, and truth, and holiness, and power :  
I own them Thine, O Christ, and bless Thee for this hour.

“ O, full of truth and grace,  
Smile of Jehovah's face,  
O tenderest heart of love untold !  
Who may Thy praise unfold ?  
Thee, Saviour, Lord of lords and King of kings,  
Well may adoring seraphs hymn with veiling wings.

“ I have no words to bring  
Worthy of Thee, my King,  
And yet one anthem in Thy praise  
I long, I long to raise ;  
The heart is full, the eye entranced above,  
But words all melt away in silent awe and love.

“ How can the lip be dumb,  
The hand all still and numb,  
When Thee the heart doth see and own  
Her Lord and God alone ?  
Tune for Thyself the music of my days,  
And open Thou my lips, that I may show Thy praise.

“ Yea, let my whole life be  
One anthem unto Thee ;  
And let the praise of lip and life  
Outring all sin and strife.  
O Jesus, Master, be Thy name supreme  
For heaven and earth the one, the grand, the eternal theme !”  
—F. R. HAVERGAL.



## CHAPTER XI

### *"THOUGH THE FIG-TREE SHALL NOT BLOSSOM"*

#### A Life of Divine Joy

THE passage from which the heading of this chapter has been taken, contains the most exquisite illustration of the power of spiritual religion to be found in the Bible. The effects of the hostile invasion which Habakkuk is here describing, are enough to make the natural heart despair. The Chaldean army would consume or destroy the best and most necessary productions of the land; not only seizing upon the cattle and devouring the fruits of the earth, but so injuring the fruit-trees as to render them incapable of yielding any produce. Concerning the result of this desolation and wanton injury the prophet sings, dark though the night was:

“For though the fig-tree shall not blossom,  
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;  
The labour of the olive shall fail,  
And the fields shall yield no meat;  
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,  
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:

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Yet will I rejoice in the Lord,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength,  
And He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,  
And will make me to walk upon mine high places."  
—(HAB. iii. 17-20).

In this rapturous outburst, we have holy and triumphant joy manifesting itself on an occasion when, in the ordinary course of things, the very opposite experience might naturally have been expected. Spiritual religion detaches men so completely from the things that are seen; inspires within them such emotions; imparts to them such confidence; habituates them so entirely to find the fruition of their desires in God, that when every earthly stream is dried, they have an infinite supply in Jehovah's all-sufficient and exhaustless fulness.

If we duly recognised the place of Divine joy in the Christian life, and, as Dr Dale has suggested, confessed and forsook *the sin of gloominess*, we should recover somewhat of our lost power among the people. The Church of the first ages went from conquering to conquer, because the Christians were filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. There is a tradition that our Lord, though He often wept, never smiled. That tradition is contradicted both by the life of Jesus and by His words. Instead of affecting what a certain writer has called "a holy melancholy," Jesus was found at the tables of all sorts of men; and instead of discouraging the harmless festivities of life, he actually turned water into wine, that the rejoicings at the marriage at Cana of Galilee might not be

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abruptly closed. As for His words, let us once more listen to them: “These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John xv. 11). “And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (John xvi. 22). The sadness of Good Friday was to be turned by that Resurrection morning into a swift and continual joy. The foundation of this gladness, which was to increase greatly at Pentecost, is in the words, “I will see you again”; and to show that this joy is not like happiness, an experience which depends on what “haps” or “happens,” Jesus says, “Your joy no man taketh from you”; in other words, it is independent of all foes and all externals.

Joy is the natural state of God’s universe. Its Creator meant it to be full of joy, and though “the whole creation groans and travails in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God,” how much of joy remains, despite the accursed sin of man. The birds carol their songs of gladness, while men groan and grovel in a worse than Egyptian darkness. The lark soars to heaven’s gate, pouring out its very being in ecstasy, while men hug their chains, and bow down in anguish, amid the valleys and the shadows of earth. The very winds are full of melody, and the waters make music as they splash upon the shores; the sun comes out of his chamber like a bridegroom, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race; the earth puts on her bridal attire, and, beautiful with bud and blossom, breaks forth into singing; the trees of the

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forest clap their hands, and the mountains and hills rejoice together before the Lord. But the dusty lanes and crowded tenements are full of sad, bleeding, and weary hearts. Even the little children in the slums of the great cities scarcely ever sing. The prisons are full of wretched and rebellious criminals. The maniac mutters his curses within the walls of the crowded asylum; while in the wards of the hospitals are thousands of the sick, the suffering, and the dying. The misery that exists is the result of the curse which ever rests upon those, who, in the exercise of that freedom which belongs to them, seek to counteract the purposes of God, and turn cosmos into chaos. To come into harmony with God's wondrous programme is to share the joy of the Creator of the universe, a joy which is eternally annexed to the sharing of His mind.

Yet the natural world *can* give joy; there is the joy of *youth*, before the back is bowed with burdens or the memory stored with bitter memories. There is the joy of *health*, when the blood courses through the veins, when the nerves are unjaded, when the brain is clear, when sleep is sweet, when food is pleasant, when activity is exhilarating. There is the joy of *success*, when well-laid plans produce long-desired results, when the battle has been won, the fortune accumulated, the coveted position secured. There is the joy of *affection*, when the heart has loved, and when its outpouring comes back, like the treasures of the cloud to the sea, in tender appreciation.

There are a thousand sources of joy in the natural

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world, but they are all transitory, and like a beautiful dream, when the sleep is broken, the best of natural joy is swiftly gone. The joys of youth and health, the joys of success and affection, are perpetually passing away. *The joy is exhausted by the enjoyment.* Our heart craves for a joy that is abiding, and such we have in union with Jesus, who makes every loyal heart the partaker of a joy that has its roots in Himself.

The natural joy of which we have been speaking is the joy of the man; this is the joy of the Christian; the one belongs largely to the senses, and can never satisfy; the other has its rise in God, and satisfies abundantly; the one is subject to perpetual change; the other is unchanging, like its source; the one is easily disturbed by visible and invisible enemies; the other no created thing can take from us. The joy of the wicked is a false joy; it has its seat in a heated imagination and agitated senses; there is no contentment about it; it is wild and turbulent. He may laugh and be glad in the eyes of the world, but in his heart is terror and disappointment. It is like the false joy of Belshazzar, who was singing at the banquet while God was writing the sentence of his condemnation on the wall.

But have we, then, to make our choice between natural and spiritual joy? Nay, God does not call us to surrender any natural joy that is worth possessing. On the contrary, the joys of youth, and health, and success, and affection are inconceivably increased and intensified by our spiritual joys.

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“ Heaven above is softer blue,  
Earth around is sweeter green !  
Something lives in every hue  
Christless eyes have never seen :  
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,  
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,  
Since I know, as *now* I know,  
I am His and He is mine.”

Let us notice—

### I. *The Source of Divine Joy.*

There is so little joy among us to-day because there is so much that is formal, and cold, and worldly. With a fuller knowledge of Jesus would come a larger experience of joy. He is the source of this super-human and supernatural joy, and when the nature is submitted to the Fire of God that burns up “the dross of base desire,” there flows into the purified soul a stream of pure, deep, steady joy, the outcome of harmony with the Divine nature. Jesus had an abiding consciousness of the Father’s love; communion with Him was never interrupted; He was guileless, holy, harmless, and undefiled; He had that perfect love that casts out fear; He delighted to do the will of God; the law of God was His delight; His faith made the things unseen as substantial as the things seen. As a result, though He was “the Man of Sorrows,” He was inspired with joy, and this joy He would have fulfilled in His disciples, and carried to a height which the circumstances of His mission made impossible in His own experience.

Jesus tells His disciples that this joy is to be *His*

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*presence* with them. “*I will see you again*, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Everything is based upon the association they are to have with Christ. There is nothing at all of self-sufficiency in what is promised. It is not that these men are to develop some interior strength, or to drift into some region of calm indifference where the influences of their fellow-men shall not touch them any longer. It is that they are to come to a new life with Him. The new joy which is to enter into them is to be distinctly a joy of relationship and not of self-containment, a joy which is to escape the invasion of the men who disturb all other joys by being held in the hand of a Stronger Being, out of which no earthly power shall be able to pluck it away.” \*

This Divine joy becomes ours as we appropriate our share of the Pentecost, for at the Pentecost the joy of the disciples was fulfilled. When Jesus ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the throne, He received from the Father in fullest measure, as the Son of Man, the gift of the Holy Spirit to bestow upon His people (Acts xi. 33). That Spirit was to Him the oil of joy, and we, as His fellows, become partakers of His anointing and of His joy. Jesus was anointed, not only to proclaim liberty to the captives, but to *give* beauty for ashes, to *give* the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isa. lxi. 3).

This joy springs out of *sacrifice*. “These things have I spoken unto you,” Jesus said, “that My joy may be in you.” What a strange time to talk about

\* Dr Phillips Brooks, “Sermons Preached in English Churches,” p. 294.



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joy! Half an hour later He was under the olive-trees in the garden of Gethsemane, exclaiming, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; but it was out of that utter surrender of self, at the bidding of love, that His joy sprang. There is no joy like His, but that which comes out of self-sacrifice. "There is no joy that humanity is capable of to compare for a moment with that bright, warm, continuous sunshine which floods the soul that is freed from the clouds and mists of self and the darkness of sin. Self-sacrifice, at the bidding of Jesus Christ, is the recipe for the highest, the most exquisite, the most Godlike gladness of which the human heart is capable. There is only one gladness that is worth calling so—and that is the gladness which comes to us when we give ourselves utterly away to Jesus Christ, and let Him do with us as He will." \*

How strikingly this is illustrated in the experience of Paul. Writing to the Philippians, he says: "If I be offered upon the service and sacrifice of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause do ye joy and rejoice with me" (ii. 17, 18). The allusion is to the practice of pouring out libations or drink-offerings over sacrifices, the libation being held to be a preparatory element of the sacrifice. The Christian is here described as at once sacrifice and priest, offering his own body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and with it "the service of his faith," the sacrifice of doing good and communicating (see Heb. xiii. 15, 16). Paul rejoices at the

\* MacLaren's "Holy of Holies," p. 197.

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prospect of pouring out his life as a libation upon this sacrifice, and thus following His Master in the way of suffering. In the sense of community of sacrifice, “he rejoices with them all,” and calls upon the Philippian Christians, for the same cause, to joy and rejoice with him.

Joy is the heavenly fruit which is specially bestowed upon those who give themselves to the ministry of Intercession. There is a sunniness about such which is the fruitage of this unselfish labour. “Whoever desires,” says Faber, “to joy in God, let him throw away himself and his own ends, and betake himself to intercession as if it were his trade, for joy is the especial recompense of intercession. It is part of His joy who rejoices in the harvest of His passion. What stirs in our hearts has come to us from His. It was first in His before it was in ours, and an angel’s presence would be less desirable than is that little taste of the Redeemer’s joy.”

If we would be filled with the joy of Jesus, we must take the pains to find out what He meant when He said: “*These things* have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you.” It will be readily seen that they are things concerning privilege and concerning duty. Abiding in Him; His words abiding in us; bearing much fruit; keeping His commandments; loving one another as He has loved us; these are the things; and if we desire His joy—the joy that always rises superior to circumstances; and that no man can take from us—we must seek it in loving obedience to “these things.” Where there is little faith and little love, there will be little

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joy ; but where faith and love abound, there will be a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

### II. *The Power of Divine Joy.*

This joy forms the very marrow and strength of Christian life; it is the strength of Christian zeal and work, and specially does it constitute the power of influence over the unsaved. The possession of the joy of the Lord in its superabundance, is an argument which the opponents of Christianity cannot gainsay. It is a charm to the weary and heavy laden which it is difficult to resist; and it never fails to awaken a longing in their hearts to drink from the river that makes glad the city of God. We are so constituted, that spectacles of joy and peace never fail to exert a powerful influence over us. Even the happiness of the lower animals charms and exhilarates us; but when the joy we behold resides in the innermost sanctuary of the believer, and is destined to survive the transient rays of earthly bliss, such a joy will ever win the hearts of men to a Pentecostal religion. Many a stronghold of Satan has fallen before the joyous shouts of God's anointed believers; many a one, out of weakness, has been made strong by the possession of this joy. It is said that when the Jews were delivered from the diabolical plot of Haman, their expressions of joy were so universal and overwhelming, that vast numbers of the heathen renounced their gods, and adopted the worship of Jehovah. If all ministers of the Glad Tidings, and teachers, were to seek and obtain a full baptism of abiding and victorious joy, there would be such a revival within

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as would astonish the multitude without, as it did at Pentecost, when “They were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking, said, They are filled with new wine.” And so they were, but it was the wine of Divine joy.

Both nature and grace testify that there is *strength* in joy. A sorrowful man is generally a dispirited man. The old song about a sad heart tiring in a mile, is as true of service for God as in any other case. Melancholy breeds depression and despair. When the Psalmist describes the people of God as full of gladness, and as engaged in constant praise, he adds: “They go from strength to strength.” There is power even in the natural joy of which we have spoken; but without Divine joy, the possession of health, position, riches, fame, friends, may be a temptation and an occasion of defeat rather than of victory. The tendency is to rest in such good as our portion. That is surely the reason why Jesus said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.” “Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” Abounding blessings do not, alas! always produce abounding thanks. There are those, few though they be, to whom all outward joys are wings to bear them Godward. As wealth increases, their liberality keeps equal pace, and they find the more occasion for honouring God and for blessing their fellow-men. That which is to others a fatal temptation is to them a means of grace. The more they have, the more they give; the more they give, the

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more they rejoice ; and they find in their self-forgetful love a foretaste of that fulness of joy which is in God's immediate presence.

No man is glad when living to himself, for God has made him for the life of communion. The perfect form of human life, the Pattern to which we are being conformed, was the life which found its blessedness in giving itself for mankind. If we would know the power of joy, we must loose the wings of our powers of ministry, and stir our soul to some work which shall scatter blessings. Many a man is a crippled, half-developed being, until his unselfish ministry is drawn forth. But when he has once tasted the joy of doing good, he is like the lame man after Peter's touch ; he goes into the great Temple of Life walking, and leaping, and praising God. If life is sad, let us make it glad by whole-hearted surrender and loving service. If we are conscious of being weighed down under our burdens, let us appropriate that joy of the Lord which is our strength. There are men among us who never seem to tire ; they readily respond to endless claims ; they seem able to do the work of several ordinary men. What is their secret ? They have found that there is no dynamic like the joy of the Holy Ghost. Hence they are exuberant, overflowing, irrepressible, and their joy is contagious. They have learned what He meant who said, " I have meat to eat the world knows not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

It is said of the early Christians that " they were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost " (Acts xiii.

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52). Instead of spirituality and gladness being antagonistic, the soul is full of joy because the Spirit has come to His chosen temple, and the fruit of His coming is a more perfect joy, so that the more largely we possess the Holy Spirit the greater becomes our joy. That His work is to make people light-hearted and glad, that His ministry is to add to the laughter and sunshine of the world, has never occurred to some people as among the possibilities. It is, of course, impossible that the Holy Spirit should produce, or seek to produce, in human nature any result that is not in harmony with the Divine Nature. The Spirit comes to make us “According to the Pattern,” and if we are made joyous by the Spirit, it is certain that God Himself is a joyous Being.

The joy the Spirit gives is the outgrowth of causes which He has implanted within us. If we sing, it is because we have the capacity and the desire of song. If we laugh, it is because our spirit is capable of delight. If we have joy, it is because the causes of joy have been born within us. What joy springs up when the precious blood of Jesus cleanses the heart from all sin, and the Spirit of Pentecost is trusted to come and be Himself the well-spring of gladness opening in the nature, a running stream of joy which flows on through pain or poverty, through loneliness or persecution, through tribulation or trial, like a gladdening river through a desert of sand. What a joy comes in with that increase of spiritual discernment, when, through the Spirit’s indwelling, we grow in mental vision, and are able to look deeper and still deeper into the heart of things. The Spirit



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comes to make us wise, and to save us from that imperfection of vision, that lack of accurate discernment as to the value of things, to which so much of the misery of life can be traced. One man looks at the wine-cup and sees happiness in it, another looks and sees the serpent in it. This is why so much of the work which is attempted among the miserable captives of drink fails. The Spirit of God is needed to bring to them a revelation which, in thousands of cases, has compelled men to abandon the accursed habit; and having done this, He has furnished the dynamic they needed for victory, and the enthusiasm they needed to turn their life into an unceasing Hallelujah Chorus.

What can refresh and invigorate like the joy of the Lord in the midst of life's temptations and tribulations! There is no trace of morbidness in any of Paul's Epistles, yet who was such a sufferer as he? The rule of his life was "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing." It has been well said that "there is nothing more contemptible in itself, and there is no more sure mark of a trivial nature, and a trivial round of occupations, than unshaded gladness, that rests on no deep foundations of quiet, patient grief." Paul was always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, because he was always thinking of others and feeling for others. In one sense he forgot everything, in another sense he forgot nothing. Everything was coloured and shaped by his own previous experiences. What he had suffered through sin enabled him to look right in upon the suffering of the world; to him the mask was torn off, and he saw behind



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the world's hollow laughter a skeleton face revealed in all its hideousness: he was therefore continually “filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ.”

Unshaded gladness, then, is not the truest sign of a noble nature in such a world as this. There is a sadness more enviable than the sparkle of superficial joy. “In the contemplation of evil, the sight of this suffering and strife and wretchedness and wrong which oppressed the Saviour's soul, what but a superficial nature can be selfishly joyous? There is enough of sorrow and sin surely still left in the world to make a thoughtful mind no stranger to the grief which hung like a perpetual shadow over the spirit of Jesus.” An illustrious historian said that he could discover in eminent men, of various periods, an impoverishment and decay of heart and intellect, dating from a crisis of their lives, when they had wilfully thrown off some great sorrow which might have given them consistency and depth. In this sense Paul was always sorrowing; and we may make every sorrow a message to teach us something more about our relations to God and to our fellows, for we may be sure that there is no sorrow but has in it that which we need, and cannot afford to part with; and this is true whatever may be the occasion of the sorrow.

Joy is the Divine cordial with which the King strengthens the hearts of the pilgrims to the Celestial city. The road may be rough; the way may be long; the enemies may be many, but, drinking from the cup of joy, the pilgrims can laugh and sing. There may

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come martyrdom, like that of Faithful in "Vanity Fair," but even then, the joy of the Lord is their strength. The jailer announced at the prison-door of one who now wears the martyr's crown, "To-morrow is the day fixed for your burning!" He clapped his hands and smiled, while he said: "It will be sharp work to-morrow; I shall breakfast below on fiery tribulations, and afterwards I shall sup with Christ." When the morrow came, and he was led through the crowds who lined the streets, he said, as he rattled the chains upon his hands: "I value these iron chains far more than if they had been of gold; it is a sweet thing to die for Christ." When they brought him to the place of burning, and kindled the faggots around him, he sang with a triumphant voice the old psalm: "God is our Refuge and Strength, a Help right sure to find in the time of trouble." Whatever therefore of sorrow or suffering may be in our path, we need not fear to encounter it, if, like the Strong Son of God, we are anointed with the oil of joy. The sorrow is surface, the joy is central; the sorrow springs from circumstances, the gladness from God; therefore the sorrow is "but for a moment, and gladness is perennial." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv. 10).

### III. *The Fulness of Divine Joy.*

The joy of which Jesus spoke to His disciples was the joy of His return and of His abiding presence

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with them. “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” At His resurrection and at Pentecost their joy was fulfilled, because they had found Him who, in giving Himself, completes man’s nature with that which was lost in the fall by separation from Him. “Without Him,” as one has strikingly said, “we are imperfect, only half our proper selves. With Him we are complete, even if in the world, like Him, we are poor, and mourners, and acquainted with grief.” With Him, we can be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, yet possessing all things. Jesus gives us a glimpse of the fulness of joy in the words which are confirmed by the reiterated Verily: “And in that day ye shall ask Me no questions. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John xvi. 23, 24). Here are three distinct blessings, each of which goes to make up fulness of joy. (1) Perfected knowledge: “In that day ye shall ask Me no questions.” In other words, all that now perplexes you will then be clear. (2) Perfect fulfilment of desires: “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, He will give it you in My name.” Instead of asking questions of Christ, questions which only discovered how full they were of self, they would henceforth offer petitions to the Father, and whatsoever they should ask, as children yielding up their will to His, He would give it them in the name or nature of His Son. (3) Perfected joy: “Ask and receive, that your joy may be full.” This is the joy of ever knowing

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His abiding union with us, filling us with His fulness as He is filled with God. And sorrow is the appointed passage to this fulness of joy. "If we suffer with Christ we shall reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). This fulness of joy never comes except through suffering, and few have the fulness of joy, because few will accept the suffering. The flowers that bloom in this Paradise have been transplanted from Gethsemane; the fruit of the Tree of Calvary must be tasted before we can eat of this sweet fruit of the Tree of Life. "In His presence is fulness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11).

"Faith only hath beheld that secret place,  
Faith only knows how great, how high, how fair,  
The Temple where the Lord unveils His Face  
To His belovèd there.  
O how unfading is that pure delight!  
How full the joy of that exhaustless tide  
Which flows for ever in its glorious might,  
So still, so wide!  
And deep we drink with sweet eternal thirst,  
With lips for ever eager as at first,  
Yet ever satisfied."



“COULD the earth speak, it would say, I have felt the hard plough to-day; I know what is coming, I have now to do something; in due time I shall be sown with seed, and in a few months I shall be crowned with gold. When the plough-point first struck me I was full of pain and distress, and I could have cried out for very agony, for the point was sharp, and driven through me with great energy; but, now I bethink me, this means the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear, golden harvest and harvest-home. What a rest I shall have when I have done my duty, filled the barns of men, and driven hunger away from the streets and homes of the world. When the plough of God’s Providence first cuts up a man’s life, what wonder if the man should exclaim a little, yea, if he should give way to one hour’s grief, and say he thought he had escaped all that kind of treatment! But the man may come to himself ere eventide, and say, ‘Plough on, Lord; I want my life to be ploughed all over, that it may be sown all over, and that in every corner there may be golden grain or beautiful flowers. Pity me that I exclaimed when I first felt the plough-share; Thou knowest my frame, Thou rememberest that I am but dust; but now I recollect, I put things together, I see Thy meaning; so drive on, Thou Ploughman of Eternity.’”—Dr JOSEPH PARKER.

## CHAPTER XII

### *THE PLOUGHMAN AND HIS METHODS*

#### A Life of Loving Discipline

“GIVE ye ear, and hear my voice ; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the ploughman plough continually to sow ? doth he *continually* open and break the clods of his ground ? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not scatter abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and put in the wheat in rows, and the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in the border thereof ? For his God doth instruct him aright, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a sharp threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin ; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Is bread corn crushed ? Nay, he will not ever be threshing it, and driving his cart wheels and his horses over it ; he doth not crush it. This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in effectual working” (Isa. xxviii. 23-29, R.V., margin).



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To Isaiah's prediction of destruction the people replied, we have bought destruction off, meaning of course that they had formed a treaty with some foreign power. Isaiah tells them in reply, that no matter how they make their bed, either with the help of Egypt or Assyria, they will not find it comfortable. "For the bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than a man can wrap himself in it" (ver. 20). He says in other words, that short of subjection to, and reliance upon the God who has made them for Himself, there is for them no such thing as rest.

From confidence in their clever diplomacy the pendulum swings to despair before the judgments of God. But Isaiah is always careful to intermingle promises with threatenings, comfort with denunciation. When he probed their wounds he was careful to pour in oil and wine. Having denounced the sinners of Judah, he has words of consolation for those whose hearts have been touched and stirred by his warning. He puts his message of consolation in the form of a parable, leaving it to their spiritual insight to discover the meaning.

The Church of God is here compared to an arable field, and the processes by which God educates and disciplines His Church are compared to those employed by the agriculturist in the cultivation of such a piece of ground, and the obtaining of a harvest from it. There are three principal processes in the Divine husbandry, so the parable suggests, and upon each of these we will dwell.

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### I. *The Preparation of the Ground.*

For four hundred and thirty years, God allowed the ploughshares and harrows of tyrannical and cruel Egyptian overseers and taskmasters to break up and pulverise what would otherwise have been an ungenial and unpromising soil. Like Israel, we need the ploughshare and the harrow, for the first condition of the human soil is the wilderness condition. Thorns, briars, and thistles abound, and the ground is cumbered with falling and decaying materials. The first thing is to have the axe laid at the root of the trees, that the ground may be made susceptible to the plough. Then the ploughshare must go through the rough soil, tearing up and throwing out the roots, and laying open the soil to the sun. Presently, when the work of draining has been done, the farmer puts in the plough as far as the iron can go, breaking up and mellowing the soil and the subsoil deep down in the earth. The stiff, stubborn clay must not be treated like the light, dry sand; the different soils must have a different treatment. How suggestive all this is of the Discipline of life! There is first a burning up of the briars and thorns, for the curse upon nature is fulfilled in man (Isa. x. 17). Then there is a breaking up of the fallow ground, and a ploughing deeply into the subsoil.

But all this, says the prophet in his parable, is only preparatory: "Doth the ploughman plough *continually* to sow? doth he *continually* open and break the clods of his ground?" He does not use his plough and harrow without intention, or for mere

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sport. The object he has in view is fruitfulness of the soil, and by methods that are protracted and painful, crop upon crop must be produced, and the earth must be made to yield her increase. He does not plough continually, or every day, as the word also means. The ploughing is a means, and not an end; and just as the wise tiller of the soil is discriminating in his methods, dealing with soil and seed according to its nature, so also is God. The ploughman's skill is the result of wisdom implanted in him by God: "his God doth instruct him aright and doth teach him." That expression should be taken in connection with the last verse of the parable. "This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in effectual working" (see margin). The word "working" means furtherance, help, salvation; and the expression means that God is perfectly possessed of the true wisdom, or insight, which carries things through, the wisdom which causes things to succeed. How safe and blessed a thing it is to be in the hands of such a God! Surely He who teaches the ploughman will be able to adapt His modes of treatment to the moral needs of His creatures; and though His ways are often past finding out, yet—

" Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will."

This is the explanation of Discipline. It is a means to an end. There is nothing in the Discipline *itself*.

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God does not tear up the ground of our hearts to show us how strong He is, any more than the ploughman does. As one has said, "God does not exercise Almightyness in crushing feebleness." When He sends the sharp ploughshare through our heart, He has an object in view: that is an act preparatory to some other act. We miss the whole genius and moral inspiration of Discipline, if we suppose that we are merely clay in the hands of a potter, merely objects upon which God plays off the miracles of His Omnipotence. When the Lord throws a man down, it is not that He may trample him in the dust, but that He may work in him some wondrous ministry of grace and love.

Our great concern should therefore be the improvement of Discipline. Just as we are no better for the food we have not digested, and for the knowledge we have not translated into obedience, so the mere fact of our having often had the ploughshare of sorrow driven through our hearts amounts to nothing, unless it has resulted in the priceless possession of human character. We are either softened, subdued, and chastened by the Discipline; or, like Pharaoh, we allow the soil of our nature to be encrusted by rebellious thoughts, until the light and rain and sunshine of God can get no access to us. What is our behaviour when under God's plough and harrow? We may *submit* to His will, which is the lowest ground we can take, for there is not much piety in submission when resistance would be of no avail. We may *acquiesce* in the Will of God, which is a decided ascension. We may also sing

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in the night of our sorrow, "I will bless the Lord at *all* times: His praise shall *continually* be in my mouth." We may say, even though our utterance is choked with sobs, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, *blessed* be the name of the Lord." In so doing we win a battle for Jehovah; we vindicate His character in His dealings with one of the sons of men; and we strike a blow at the Accuser who says, "Only drive the ploughshare of sorrow and bereavement into his nature deep enough, and He will curse thee to thy face."

Let it never be forgotten that where God ploughs He means to sow. What comfort that thought should bring to those who are full of grief, and who say in the bitterness of their heart, "My God hath forsaken me." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; *while we look* not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18). The word "*worketh*" covers the domain of the Holy Spirit's office. His one object in the ordering of our life, in controlling all its exigencies, and in the administration of Discipline, is the conformation of the believer to the image of Christ, the production, in other words, of a life "According to the Pattern." To this end He is at work within us, and to this end He is at work without us. What other end, indeed, can He have but this? (Phil. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 26-29). The expression, "*while we look*," covers the domain of the

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believer's activity. We shall have no difficulty in co-operating with God, or in coming into the fullest accord with His plans, if we look at all disciplinary experiences in the light of the things that are eternal. That is the only light by which we can interpret aright, the dark and contradictory problems of life. Let us again turn to this parable and notice—

### II. *The Putting in of the Seed.*

How prominent is the thought of discrimination here! The husbandman does not set to work carelessly. He does not go to his granary, and taking out fitches, cummin, wheat, and barley, fling them about right and left. He estimates the value of each grain, and arranges them first in his mind, and then in the soil, according to their proportionate values. Fennel and cummin are among the smallest of seeds, and are grown to give a flavour to the dish on the table. They were eaten as a relish with various kinds of food, and are not of as much importance as the wheat, "the principal wheat," as it is called in the Authorised Version. The fennel and cummin are sown broadcast; they are thrown out with a lavish hand on every side. The wheat and barley are dropped into the soil more deliberately and carefully, and are run into lines.

Let us learn to keep things distinct. A false idea of the relative importance of the things temporal and eternal is one of the most fruitful causes of the appalling worldliness of the age. Let a man of the world take the trouble to put down at the end of the week the hours spent in caring for his body,



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the physical part of his being ; then the hours spent in caring for his soul, the mental part of his being ; then the hours spent in caring for his spirit, the immortal part of his being, and he will probably receive a shock. It is more than likely that the analysis will show that where days have been given to making provision for the body and the mind, moments have been given in providing for the needs of the spirit ; or the whole of the time had been taken up with sowing fennel and cummin, and "the principal wheat," the master thing, has been left altogether unsown.

I have read that over the triple doorways of Milan Cathedral there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other there is sculptured a cross, and underneath are the words, "All that which troubles is but for a moment." While underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "*That only is important which is eternal.*" If we did but realise the truth of these words, we should not fritter away our time on trifles, or be so greatly troubled by what we in ignorance call "adverse circumstances." The farmer says, as he contemplates the sowing time, "What will pay me best?" "What shall I make the principal crop?" There is a place for the fennel and the cummin, but what folly it is to be sowing nothing else when it is remembered that this is our little seed-plot for eternity, and "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."



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### III. *The Threshing of the Seed.*

After the ploughing, the sowing, and the ripening comes the threshing; and the prophet goes on to show how the agriculturist treats each seed according to its nature. "For the fitches (fennel) are not threshed with a sharp threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Is bread corn crushed? Nay, he will not ever be threshing it, and driving his cart wheels and his horses over it; he doth not crush it" (vers. 27, 28). It is easy to see that what is taught in the whole parable—and in verse 26 is ascribed to a Divine source—is human intelligence working with a purpose, following a method and avoiding excess. We have seen already that sowing is the end of the ploughing, which opens the soil and breaks its clods. The surface has been levelled, and each seed comes in order; the finer first, the heavier afterwards; wheat in rows, barley in its appointed place, and spelt in the border. A like discretion prevails in threshing. The heavy threshing-sledge, the waggon wheel and horses, would crush the lighter grains, and, if applied too long, would be fatal to corn also.

It will, perhaps, help us to understand the parable if we look at a picture. It is an Oriental harvest-time. There is the threshing-floor. It is a circular spot of rock or trodden ground, smooth and broad, from eighty to a hundred feet in diameter, generally on an elevation where there would be a strong breeze. There come the reapers, bending beneath their loads

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of gathered grain, which they cast upon the threshing-floor. Here is the threshing-sledge, answering to the Roman *tribulum*. It is a heavy wooden platform. On the under side it is thickly studded with pieces of broken flint or savage iron teeth. The oxen are yoked to it, and they drag it backwards and forwards over the grain. See how the wheat is broken away from the enfolding and now useless husk, until all over the threshing-floor there lie multitudes of the clean kernels. The straw is now pushed aside, and with a sort of hollow shovel, called a fan, the wheat is thrown up against the wind, which carries away the chaff. There is the grain, which the husbandman has been seeking through all the ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, and threshing, and fanning. It is fit now to be ground, and made into bread for the use of man, but it would not be what it is, but for the *tribulum*, or threshing-sledge. How interesting, with this knowledge of Eastern agriculture, becomes that word: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. xli. 15, 16).

Even in the case of the corn, says the prophet, the *tribulum* is employed in moderation. The husbandman will not drive the roller and horses over the grain until it is crushed to dust. The end He has in view is not the destruction, but the purification and preservation of the grain, and

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the wheels cease rolling when they have done their work.

Delicate plants, like the fennel and cummin, are not subjected to this rough treatment. It is enough to take them in the hand and shake them; to tap them gently with a slender rod; or to strike them sharply with a stout staff, for the seed is easily shaken out. To use the threshing-sledge, with its iron teeth, would be to destroy utterly these tiny seeds.

“Is God less discriminating?” asks the prophet. Nay, “He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in effectual working.” All His ways have conformity to the Pattern as their end; and He has many varieties of treatment for separating the chaff from the wheat. Sometimes it is the gentle shaking of His hand; at others it is the tapping with the slender rod. Sometimes He uses the stouter staff, at others the heavy *tribulum*; but no more force is used in any case, or for a moment longer, than is necessary. “He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust,” and His object is not to destroy but to “tribulate” the grain into purity, and so to fit it for His garner.

The end of all Discipline, whether gentle or severe, is fruitfulness and satisfaction. The bread upon the table which nourishes your body has come to its usefulness through much tribulation. The rain, and snow, and frost have now done their work. The corn has yielded up its life and strength to man, but it has only become fruitful through a shaking, a breaking, a threshing, a grinding, and a baking. “Save us

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from being bruised!" is the cry of the men of the world. They want comfort, ease, health, outward prosperity; Discipline is never welcomed, as it should be, as one of the ministers into whose hands God has put the formation and testing of that priceless possession—human character.

"*'Bread corn is bruised.'* Shrink not, my soul,  
From the plucking and the binding,  
From the breaking and the grinding:  
The heart God breaks, He doth make whole.  
The corn unshelled and thrown aside  
Cannot for man's sore need provide."

We have only to look into our New Testament to see how necessary and profitable a thing "tribulation" is: "These things have I spoken unto you," said Jesus, "that in Me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). We move in two realms, "in Me" and "in the world." As we live in the first of these spheres, Christ, we must of necessity come into hostile collision with lives that move only in the sphere of the world. The antagonism is not so plain to-day as it ought to be, but if we are going to live "According to the Pattern," we shall be treated much in the same way as Jesus Christ was. "A disciple is not above his Master, nor a servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord" (Matt. x. 24, 25).

In the Pitti Palace, at Florence, there are two pictures which hang side by side. One represents a stormy sea, with its wild waves, and black clouds, and

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fierce lightnings flashing across the sky. In the waters a human face is seen, wearing an expression of the utmost agony and despair. The other picture also represents a sea tossed by as fierce a storm, with clouds as dark ; but out of the midst of the waves a rock rises, against which the waters dash in vain. In a cleft of the rock are some tufts of grass and herbage, with sweet flowers, and amid these a bird is seen sitting on her nest, quiet and undisturbed by the wild fury of the storm. The first picture represents the distress and anguish of those who live only in the one realm, "*in the world.*" The second picture represents the unspeakable blessedness of those who live in both realms, and who, in the fiercest storms of life, are kept in perfect peace, because, while they are "in the tribulation," they are also "in Christ."

In what light is this loving Discipline to be regarded? Paul tells us we are to "glory" in it. We are to do this, he says, because we know "that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, probation ; and probation, hope : and hope putteth not to shame ; because the Love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us" (Rom. v. 3-5). It was not easy to be a Christian in Paul's day. The *tribulum*, with its iron teeth, often bruised him ; and never was a nature more sensitive than his. He regarded his tribulations as an occasion for glorying, because he knew that they were the Divine instruments for the purification, the refining, the testing, and the approval of human character.

He justifies his assertion that tribulation should

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be gloried in by setting forth the gradations by which tribulation works the highest good. It works "patience." The word translated "patience" comes from a verb which means "to keep good under"; and the only way in which we can put to the proof the calming, victorious strength of God, is to have our power for "keeping good" under blows or burdens put to the test. "Patience," then, works "experience" or "approval." The word denotes the proved man. The *tribulum* has proved how rich he is in the golden wheat, when all the chaff has been removed and swept away by the wind. God wants to see how we can behave when we are detached from all the things to which we are so prone to cling; and when He has "proved" us, and we satisfy His heart, then He "approves" us, and prepares us for the next season of testing. When, finally, we have experienced the Divine force with which faith has filled and upheld us in the time of testing, we feel our "hope" to rise. Our faith is fortified by our experience. Nothing that can happen to us in the future can affright us. We do sometimes turn disappointed from the door of a man to whom we looked for help. He has put our hope to shame. Not so God; He never fails us, and His Love is the angel in the heart, that banishes all murmuring, impatience, and fear.

Dr Whyte may well say: "We cease to wonder so much at the care God takes of human character, and the cost He lays out upon it, when we think that it is the only work of His hands that shall last for ever. It is fit, surely, that the ephemeral should minister to the eternal, and time to eternity, and all else in this

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world to the only thing in this world that shall endure and survive this world. All else we possess and pursue shall fade and perish; our moral character shall alone survive. Riches, honours, possessions, pleasures of all kinds; death, with one stroke of his desolating hand, shall one day strip us bare to a winding-sheet and a coffin of all the things we are so mad to possess."

"These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? And he said unto me, These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His Temple" (Rev. vii. 13-15).

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